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HELGA: SHE WOLF OF STILBERG

(Courtesy of MVD Visual)

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The Phantom Speaks!

SUBCULTURAL NEWS: From a cursory review beyond the Phantom menace tells us that summer's here and the time is right not only for dancing on the streets but tooting to the nearest digital drive-in for a warm weather genre-film fix. While actual admission remains may continue to stanch at an alarming rate, we at the 'Scope celebrate that once.

Flourishing collied phenomenon by subbing sex-and-personality who upheld the drive-in tradition, along with some choice films that have newly made the transition from drive-in to disc. One dynamic dad-and-daughter duo, Tarry & Tiffany Dufco, check-in with a musician who supplied the soundtrack to some of drive-in cinema's most iconic offerings, most notably in the juke-arena. Dave (King of the Five Gates) Allan, whose score for Roger Corman's revolutionary *The Wild Angels* some 30 years ago ushered in a fresh, edgy sound, Dave's hard-driving instrumental have since turned up in every thing from Tarantino raves (*Highway Riders*) to *The Sopranos*. On another musical note, journalist Maury Hoady and clan, with rock actor-singer Kenny (I Was a Teenage Werewolf) Miller, who shares his memories of working with a then-unknown David Bowie back in Swinging Yids London. Debbie Robinson reports from the set of My Uncle John: a Zortola, original *Night of the Living Dead* scripter John Russo's latest modest creation, while 'Scope scribe Tim Ferrante recalls his colorful stretch spanning old-school projection booths. "Killer Kane" Hodder, of *Jason and Hatched* fame, reveals the tricks of the screen slasher trade, and Rob Frenet returns to the outdoor days of yore with his latest Drive-In Delighting (available

Chen here in this role, our postscript Pacific Rim correspondent Joseph Perry films from a pair of far-flung film fests, South Korea's 17th Annual Jeonju International Film Festival and Japan's Screen Queen Filmfest, interviews extraordinarily delectable, gorgeous shots with once and future Hulk Lord Fermyon and veritable actress Badha (*Pitch Black*) Mitchell, recently on view in two new feature films, *Sacrifice* and *Barbarians*, and our astute crew of commentators and critics look in with their typically astute opinions on the latest DVD and Blu-ray releases to cross their redolent senses.

OST OST: On a grammar note, The Rukey's furiously swinging scythe took an especially terrible toll on the acting ranks since last we convened. Several notable television icons were among the fallen, including Potty (The Potty Duke Show) Duke, 69, Peter (Lassman) Brown, 80, Abel (The



Cumachawes Fernandez, 85, **Robert (Wagon Train) Horton**, 91, **Alan (Mr. Ed) Young**, 96, and, of more recent memory, **Garry (The Larry Sanders Show) Shonding**, 66. Other notable designers who departed include **Richard (The Chase) Bradford**, 81, actor/filmmaker **Wayne (Jaka Speed) Crawford**, 66, **Larry (Dr. Giggles) Drake**, 67, **Tsuna regular Joe (Terror Farmer) Hershaker**, 62, **Don (Ivy League Killers) Francko**, 84, **Anne (The Shining) Jackson**, 90, **Jack (Planet of the Apes) Kortlund**, 93, **Micha (12 in the Moon) Kels**, 91, **Ben (Goldfinger) Kordeck**, 85, **Thomas (Bogging Bill) Sullivan**, 88, and **Kay (The Rockford Files) Santos**. 86. The rock ranks were thinned by the passing of **Kathy Emerson**, 71, **grate wizard Louisa Mack**, 74, **keyboardsist Andy "Thunderdome" Newman**, 74, and **Pinetree**, 83. Much-hypnotized heavy-weight sharp and canny personality **Mohammed Ali** lost his fight with chronic illness at age 74, while writer-director **Frank (The Entity) De Felicia**, 74, and genre writer **Memorial Rod Jones** H. **Bams**, 54, also moved on. All will be missed, but their work will continue to be accessed far into the future.

PHILATESCREEN PHYLAMES: We spent money of our free spare time on our run-up to produce a bigging on several highly recommended vintage notes making their close debate. **Appointment with Crime** (Olive Films Blu-ray) presents a fascinating case of Brits invading Hollywood gangster flicks, with James De Wolf Williams himself channeling George Rod to portray a conscienceless power or criminal; Paul Kaituma's perfect **Kansas City Confidential** (Olive Films Blu-ray) enters Venice

able screen stars Neville Brand, Jack Palance and Lee Van Cleef for a series of down and dirty prison or gangster, George Thrust and a villainous Hilary Brooke work opposite sides of the law in the fast-paced B+ caper *Mission: Impossible* (Warner Archive DVD), and *Shroud for Murder* (Kino Lorber Blu-ray) stars Famed Oldfitter as an ice-venom crooked cop in a caper he also co-directed with Howard W. Koch. Other choice fare includes a trio of '70s crime—*Killer Foe* (Kino Lorber Blu-ray), *The Diamond Merchants* and *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three: 40th Anniversary Edition* (both from Kino), and *Shout! The* (Warner's thriller *Rollercoaster*, based on a story by busy genre boss Tony Tarrow (*Mission to the Moon*) Cook. Among new films, *Gun on Hood's Eye in the Sky* (U-tar-crime Studios) shapes up as an intense affair, sort of a dense-attack variation on Sidney Lumet's *Fail-Safe* and an apt companion piece to *Analyst: Nicole's Good Kill*, featuring a top executive cat headed by Helen Mirren and the late, great Alan Rickman.

PHANTOM BOOKSHELF: Your Required Summer Reading List, meanwhile, should start with Isaac Asimov's latest *Scripta from the Crypt* entry (No. 8). Ed Wood and the Lost *Laguna Screenplays* by Gary D. Rhodes with more than a little help from his friends Robert Cramer, Lee R. Harris and senior editor Tom Winter. The entire tome reps a treasure trove for Eldreds and Bella buffs, but Bella biographer Cramer's memoir *A Tale of the Cuck: My Weekends with Ed Wood* is easily its most revelatory chapter, a jaw-dropping You Are There account from 1974 that sees Tal and his eccentric entourage (including Cowell and Vampers) gather to watch *Plan 9 from Outer Space*. Can you argue that it isn't *hansen*?

FACEBOOK BLITZ Facebook. Marvel of the modern age, or too much rampant business? As El Wood once famously put it in *Glenn & Glenn*: "You are society—stupid, ye no!" In either case, we hope you'll take a mo' to stop by and "like" *VideoScribe* Magazine! And speaking of Mo', for all you youtubers out there, *Hey Moo: Hey Duff*, a gold-pla! Howard hosted 9-part docu series revealing everything you ever wanted to know about the Three Stooges but were afraid to ask, at the risk of a double-pronged eye-poke, will be making its TV debut on August on the Decades Channel. Check your local listings. In the meantime, till next time, don't forget to...

Keep watching the screen!



Phantom Pheedback



MONDO PORTMANTEAU REDUX

Dear Phantom,
It's great to see big Tom Johnson from *and writer on the cover of VS #98*, along with the amazing Lon Chaney, Bela Lugosi and John Carradine of *The Black Sheep*. *The Mondo Portmanteau: Dr. Terror's House of Horrors* has long been one of my favorites in the "portmanteau" category and certainly merits its three-and-a-half Ro Man rating by Dreght Kemper. Likewise, I applaud The Phantom's three-and-a-half Ro Man up-praise of *Twice-Told Tales*. This often overlooked Price-Sullivan Howthorn horror flick from U.A. can easily match many of the Price-Campbell Fox features from the AIP gang. I enjoy the portmanteau or anthology-style of cinematic storytelling, or as Bob DeMott of the old ABC Network liked to call them, "cinematic" films.

I also enjoyed David-Elghan Nahmedoff's review of Monogram's *Voodoo Man*, surely one of the best (or at least most entertaining) of Lugosi's poverty row efforts from the 1940s, although it cannot top FBO's infamous cheapie *The Devil Bat*. *Voodoo Man's* movie-within-a-movie subplot features Tod Andrews (dressed as Michael Arden) as a low-budget screenwriter arriving at the offices of the Banner Motion Picture Company for a meeting with his boss, S.K. The S.K. is clearly a joking reference to producer Sam Katzman, and Banner Productions is the name of the real-life company behind *Voodoo Man* and numerous other Monogram pictures produced by Katzman and Jack Dietz. Of course, this poverty row Monogram is not, as the VS reviewer points out, in the same league as the Universal classics of the 1930s and 1940s, but it does have the superb transfixing of Bela Lugosi, John Carradine and George Zucco. There are some genuinely spooky moments, and I always get a kick out of the closing line of dialogue which essentially breaks the fourth wall with a wink and a nod. Thanks to Olive Films for helping to preserve this undervalued classic.—Timothy Walther, Menlo Park, OK

The cast definitely carries the day in the sometimes stilted but entertaining *The Black Sheep* (see our review page 23). The portmanteau approach has become something of a rarity in the fright-film field, though a quartet of directors give it a go in *Southbound*, new from Sans Pictures. For some fascinating facts about the notorious Sam Katzman's life, work and enduring B-movie reach, scope out Mark Thomas McGee's *Katzman, Nicholson, and Corns: Shaping Hollywood's Future*. Via Sans-Manner Media.

6 VideoScope



MAN WANTED

Hi Phantom & Co!
I've been a fan of *VideoScope* for a long time and read the mag raptorially when it hits the stands. Given the spectrum of movies and TV shows it covers, I finally decided to turn to you for some help. *The Hasbottle Man* TV series of 2000, starring Vincent Vanouze, was, and is, vastly underrated, and went to its radio grave far too soon. A DVD set for Season 1 was released years back, but my a-hem of a Season 2 or even an entire series collection has washed my way. I ended sending an e-mail to the powers-that-be that released the first season, but only received a vague, noncommittal reply. That was also some years back. So, I turn to the mighty *VideoScope*. Has anyone there heard of a possible completion of the DVD release of *The Incredible Man*? Are there any ears you could lend to let them know some of us out here would love to have the entire run? I appreciate your time in reading this (admittedly inept) but I figured it was worth a try.—Jeff Black, via e-mail

The first dual Season 1 DVD set, issued in 2000 by Universal Studios and complete with cast and crew audio commentaries and interviews, is available via Amazon.com (for under \$7 as of this writing)—though Amazon prices tend to be subject to sudden unexplained changes). No word, at this point, of the series' continuation on disc.

OUT OF HIS DEEP

Dear Phantom,
Your latest issue was full of great information! I saw *Black Mass* and Johnny Depp did a pretty good job as the gangster James "Whitey" Bulger. But did you notice that Johnny Depp tried to do *Goodfellas*? "You Think I'm Funny" came when he did the "family secret" segment! Johnny Depp is no Joe Peck. *Base Tomhawk* was the best horror workman ever. Those cannibals gave me chills for days. *Midnight Skyman* finally put out a good movie. I enjoyed *The Visit*. Grand parents can get a lot worse sometimes, thank goodness these were not the kids' real grandpas. I would never go into an oven to clean it, even if my wife asked me.—Paul Dale Roberts, via e-mail

Base Tomhawk is a major part of a bearing western horror trend. See also *The Mangaf Eight*, *Foramen* and *The Revenant* (page 12) for further evidence.

GLOWING REVIEW

Dear Phantom,
The *VideoScope* team keeps pushing the envelope. New ones I didn't know, old friends I didn't know were, on film-ay, and discs (*Monks With Sound* and 1971) and Gog—m 3-D! All of you, every page, keep bombarding the neophytes in understanding world film, *VideoScope* shows in the dark.—John Hoff, via e-mail

Thanks for the kind words, J.M. We like to spread the word that this is a good era for new and vintage offbeat film surfacing on disc.

MILLER TIME

Phantom,
I would really love to see a book by Dick Miller. What stories he could tell from the school of Cornman and beyond. If he ever publishes, please let me know. I have your interview with him (the issue with the Ruggell Walsh cover) in 2004.—Paddy Macdonald, Jersey City, NJ

A Dick Miller book would be a real prospect indeed. Don't know of any such plans, but the 2014 documentary feature *That Guy Dick Miller is Cool*. Apparently, it's not currently available on DVD but can be streamed via Amazon Prime, YouTube and other sources.

Send your comments and queries to:

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The Phantom of the Movies'

NEW RELEASE SHELF

New release titles are followed by year, Phantom rating, director, lead actors, running time (with titles released in separate editions, the running time refers to the Unrated version), DVD and/or Blu-ray label and release date (month and year).

RATINGS KEY

★★★★

Couldn't be better

★★★★½

Excellent

★★★★

Good

★★★★½

Not bad; worth watching

★★

Mediocre, worthwhile for a particular theme, director or genre

★★½

Poor but may have points of interest

★

Just plain bad

½★

Even worse than that

○★

The pits

N/A

Not available on video

N.D.

Not in distribution

Special thanks go to *Gaudinor Re-Mix* for his ratings symbol suggestion.



VIDEO VERITE

CHILDREN OF THE STARS (2002)

★★★★

D Bill Perrine, Diana Tsamirina, William Proctor, Don French, 78 mins. (BollingerGate Media/MVD Visual) 3/05

If the Phantom ideal of UFO cults exists, surely it must be the Unarians, who combine extraterrestrial brotherhood with past-life regressions, archangels, and the salvation of Jesus himself. This documentary takes us through their founding by Ernest and Martha Norman, to the apothecary of Roth, after Ernest's death, when she announced herself to be the transdimensional angelical Uael, and on to the present day. The oral history is accompanied by snippets of public domain SF movies, train through the Unarian center, archival footage, and clips of Unarian-produced movies (which use a right to be-

hold). For the most part, Perrine lets the Unarians tell their story themselves, with occasional contributions from sociologist Diana Tsamirina. The tale that unfolds is, of course, completely bizarre, but the Unarians are so earnest and so well meaning that it is almost impossible not to feel charmed even while one's jaw is hanging open. I would have liked to hear more from Tsamirina. What she has to say is informative and helpful, and it would have been nice to dig a little deeper into what makes the group tick. (What, for instance, could be said about the fact that the active members appear to be overwhelmingly white and middle-aged?) Still, such a wish comes rather close to wanting the film to do something different than its manifest project, and there's plenty to observe and chew on here as the material that Perrine presents without comment. A most entertaining documentary, then, filled with some truly astounding imagery and the exposition of even more astounding beliefs.

—David Annandale

CINEMA'S EXILES: FROM BITTLER TO HOLLYWOOD (2009)★★★★½

D Karen Thomas, 117 mins. (Warner Archive) 4/06

Recently used on TCM, where programmers used the occasion to stage a mini film festival featuring the efforts of several of the prominent emigre actors and actresses profiled in the docu-memoir, *Cinema's Exiles* chronicles the mass creative exodus prompted by the Nazis' rise to power in 1930s Germany. Over the course of a few short years, such soon-to-be exiled American film industry newcomers as directors Fritz (Manhattan) Lang, Billy (Sunset Boulevard) Wilder and Fred (High Noon) Zinnemann, performers Peter (The Maltese Falcon) Loree and Melvyn (Touch of Evil) Dietrich, writer-director Curt (The Wolf Man) Siodmak, and composer Hans J. (Son of Dracula) Saher and Franz (Rear Window) Waxman, among many others (over 800 in all), left their homelands to set up shop in, and profoundly alter the landscape of, a largely welcoming Hollywood. Filmmaker Thomas weaves film clips, archival footage, home movies and interviews to form a fascinating tapestry tracing one



film culture's inclination to and influence on an already established cinematic scene. To his credit, Thomas not only celebrates the oft-cited success stories experienced by the above luminaries but details the fates of many of the emigrés who failed to make a smooth transition and ultimately fell by the wayside. She also presents expert personal portraits of the artists under review, offering tales of Lang's shocking distasteful directorial style, scripter Wilder's embrace of an adaptive language at which he would soon excel, and Dietrich's warring legacy between Hollywood and her native Germany, which she would often revisit after war's end. Anecdotes of struggle, joy and tragedy interweave, but *Cinema's Exiles* ultimately emerges as an apt and accurate dramatizing how the Third Reich's loss became America's lasting gain. Signatory *Warner* smoothly handles narration chores, providing listeners with a respite from the normally obnoxious Peter Croke. Withal, *Cinema's Exiles* represents essential viewing for cinephile cultural scholars.

—The Phantom

CONVICT (2014) PG-13

D: David Field, George Bush, George Bush, Mike Rose Heywood, Franc Velez, Johnny Nasser, David Roberts 107 mins. (DVD Video) 4/16

Standard prison pictures place their stars in confined sets with menacing actors, as audiences wonder if the rookies will be able to survive. Creative directors revitalize the genre by introducing social issues to the mix. In 1984, Israeli Uri Baruchshi examined relations between Jewish and Arab convicts in *Beyond the Walls*. Nearly 30 years later, Australian co-director Bush wrote a script that features him as an Arab Australian Aboriginal. War veterans who are imprisoned for manslaughter. Although his main problem is a harassment campaign instigated by his victim's wealthy father (Richards), he must play the institution's political games. This means dealing with Mazen (Nasser), the Arab drug gang's boss and his crew—who do not lend the new guy's service. Bush seems to enjoy raising controversies. The most sexually sinister character is the most surprising: Mazen's mother and those around for purely secular reasons. Nasser is dangerously intelligent and intelligently dangerous. Field plays the warden as a defined bastard, he can satisfy Hollywood British cinema's insatiable appetite for leather villains. 2 1/2 Ro-Mans mean you might like this film. Its juxtaposition of Arab hero and WASP feel is sure to annoy Donald Trump.

—Ronald Charles Epstein

**GRUMPY OLD CRITICS
(Say the Darndest Things)**

**DIET,
CRIMSON PEAK
SCARY!**

"An extravagantly entertaining ghost story."

Roger Green, *Newsday*

"It chills and excites with its revisionist visuals."

Emine Yildirim, *Today's Zaman*

"For the two hours it lasted I was't asking any questions, only giggling, sighing, screaming and swooning."

Dana Stevens, *Male*

NOT!

"The atmosphere of dread never reaches ecstatic excesses."

Richard Brody, *The New Yorker*

"It's shockingly short on actual scares."

Andy Lea, *Daily Star*

"More silly than scary."

Rich Cline, *CommonSense.com*

**CRIMSON PEAK (2015) PG-13**

D: Guillermo del Toro. Mia Wasikowska, Jessica Chastain, Tom Hiddleston, Charlie Heaton, Jim Beaver. 119 mins. (Universal Studios) 2/16

It was nice, as *Crimson Peak* began, to see the Universal Studios logo open what promised to be an old-fashioned Gothic chiller. It was Universal, after all, that put the Gothic horror film on the map in 1911, when *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* were released. With *Crimson Peak* coming to us courtesy of monster kid ancestor del Toro, expectations are high as the new film's release date approached. Unfortunately, *Crimson Peak* is a masterpiece for the office briliant del Toro filled as a "Gothic romance." *Peak* suffers from two fatal flaws—it's neither romance nor is it scary. Two of the film might remind some viewers of the "pre-Bramble" episodes of *Dark Shadows*, that near-month period prior to the arrival of the vampire Bramble Collins on the Gothic horror soap opera. Like those early DS episodes, *Crimson Peak* boasts suspiciously elegant and atmospheric sets. But there's no there there. *Crimson Peak*, like the pre-Bramble era, looks like it should be scary but it isn't. It's dull and plodding. Brief, occasional appearances by ghosts don't do much to lift the film up from the doldrums. It's a beauty of looking, well-made film in search of an audience. The Victorian sets and costumes are lovely. The story's two monsters, one is Buffalo, New York, the other in rural England, are appropriately creepy and gurgling them in scope. But the film's basic storyline of monstrous siblings who kill wealthy women for their money is more akin to a film near than a horror flick. There's little in *Crimson Peak* to attract horror buffs, except for a few brief scenes of excessive violence which come out of left field. These sequences, which include a shot of a man's skull being kicked open, might appeal to gorehounds, but they feel out of place in a "proper" 19th-century ghost story. Fans of classics like Lewis Allen's 1944 *The Uninvited* (VS 1889) or Robert Wise's 1963 *The Haunting* (VS 842) will spend most of *Crimson Peak* waiting for the ghosts, while pro-of-feminists will savor through the film's long, long (as in 30-40 minutes) stretches of dialogue. In addition to the impressive visuals, Chastain stands high above *Crimson Peak*'s poorly conceived setting. The actress is wonderful as a deranged woman who doesn't care who she has to hurt—or kill—in order to get what she wants. The realization that it was Chastain's character, who comes across as a proper Victorian lady, who killed a big burly man twice her size with her bare hands is the film's most genuinely frightening moment. Universal includes an interview with del Toro, who offers a brief history lesson on the Gothic romance genre, among other extras.

—David-Bijah Nahmad

EARTHRISE (2014) PG

D: Glenn Payne. Maighan Berkis, Casey Eldred, Greg Gaenack, Sherril Eufala, Jon W. Sparks. 90 mins. (DVD Video) 4/16



Environmentalists point out that the Earth is our only home. But what if that weren't the case? If humanity were to relocate to Mars and dispatch expeditions to rehabilitate its home planet, how would the "Martians" react to the prospect of their return from exile? Dana Nerd (Hinkle), Vronn Collier (Hillarity) and Marshall Clayborne (Garnett), the Revlon Property's latest voyagers, experience hallucinatory fantasies as they cope with new realities. This is definitely an indie production—had this script been submitted to Rod Serling in 1961, he would have rejected it because it lacks *The Twilight Zone*'s cosmic irony and profound social commentary. This DVD is for sci-fi independent production fans who wonder if a low-budget filmmaker is capable of creating a futuristic world in a credible manner. Director Payne's ingenuity should be praised. If you did not access the commentary track, you would not know that the ship's living quarters were actually constructed from recycled building materials and that its power plant is really a closed factory in West Peak, Mississippi. The crew is composed—one of the planet's resident pigmen attached actor Ernest. Contemporary influences (including the cast's kinks and an iPad) These touches are supposed to enhance audience identification with the characters. Despite these efforts, you get a story that may deserve your spare time, but not your spare change.

—Ronald Charles Epstein

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IN THE HEART OF THE SEA (2015)

정정정 1/2

D: Ron Howard, Chris Hemsworth, Borge Nann Walker, Cillian Murphy, Brendan Gleeson, Ben Whishaw, Tom Holland, 122 mins. (Warner Home Entertainment) 3/36

In Ron Howard's lyrical, wondrous retelling of the origin of *Moby Dick*, adapted from Nathaniel Hawthorne's book, an ambitious but uncertain Melville (Whishaw) journeys to Nantucket in 1850, determined to pry the secrets of the *Essex*, the doomed whaling ship sunk by an aggressive white whale in 1820, from the sole survivor, tortured and alcoholic Tom Nickerson (Gleeson). Get set for a stirring sea yarn, as well as some literary guesswork, if you're inclined to see how real-life events influenced Melville's vision. Novice teenage filmster Tom Holland (Holland) ships out with the lightly competent and ebullient first mate Owen Chase (Hemsworth), who from the get-go is at war with the better-born, socially connected but inexperienced Captain George Pollard (Walker). Life on board is nonstop action, signals, flapping sails, rolling seas. Cinematographer Anthony Dod Mantle brings the charm of the *Essex* and underseas sea scenes to incredible life-like intensity, and once the whales appear, CGI'd to equal perfection, you know the visual effects credits will go on for miles. After landing just one whale, Pollard and Chase, alerted by a tip from a haunted Spanish whaler in Ecuador, are united in their greed to seek the Spaniard's four-masted white whale circling with hundreds of others far west in the Pacific. More than just a vengeful action film, *In The Heart of the Sea*, a blueprint for Melville's seething interpersonal conflicts, is chockful of finely realized secondary characters, while rendering—including a gutsy moment when young Tom is forced to crawl through the spout-hole of a whale to scoop out oil—and terror rituals of duty, honor and courage. Where *Moby Dick* ends at shipwreck, *In The Heart of the Sea* begins. In a tale of survival, up there with Captain Bligh and Ernest Shackleton, the men drift for 90 days. Unlike the above-mentioned, they resort to cannibalism. Next, they draw straws, killing each other for food. These scenes are the heart of the movie. Home in Nantucket, the wealthy ship owners want Owen to blurt up the gory details at the inquest, saying the ship wrecked. He refuses. Pollard, who only got the captaincy because of his father's connections, to his credit, refused also. The ship owners feared the story of a killer whale would ruin their industry. I learned, tales of the *Essex* went underground, obscuring Melville. Extras include Chase & Pollard: A Man of Means and A Man of Courage, where Hemsworth and Walker discuss their roles.

—Nancy Naglin

INTRUDERS (2015)정정 1/2

D: Adam Schindler, Rory Culkin, Beth Riesgraf, Jack Kesy, Leticia Amenez, Morgan Starr 90 mins. (Momentum) 3/16

Agonyaphobic Anna (Riesgraf) hasn't left the house in the 10 years since her father passed. She's her older brother's caregiver as he slowly succumbs to cancer. Her only contact with anyone from the outside world is with nerdy food delivery boy Dan (Culkin), who obviously has a crush on her. Anna confides in Dan that she has a sizable stash of cold hard cash in her possession and offers him a healthy chunk so he can get out of town and follow his dreams. Uncomfortable with the offer, Dan declines and leaves. After her brother passes, unbeknownst to Dan, who mentioned the loot to a friend, a trio of small-time crooks, believing Anna is at her brother's funeral, breaks into the house to find and steal the cash stash. Unable to leave the house, Anna finds herself trapped inside with the three men. Dan arrives to check on Anna and is shocked to discover the thieves manhandling the house. Keeping her with, Anna leaves the men to the basement, where some very bad things happen. As the men try to narrow, a number of disturbing revelations are suggested, and it soon becomes clear Anna is not the pushover the men first thought she was. To my mind would be to spoil some of the twists that flick brings to its "home invasion" premise. The acting is great, with Riesgraf and Culkin delivering very insightful performances about youths stuck in greenhouse lives. The standout here is Starr, once the go-to lovable "geek" in outings like *Adventureland* and TV's *Freaky and Geeks*, who now is a menacing psychotic capable of creating more icy chills with just a glance and a flicker of his eyes than most action movies can muster with 90 minutes of ghosts and jump scares. (Plus, with his full beard, he resembles an early '80s Stephen King genre loco.) All in all, then is a competent, satisfying thriller that works when yanked to the need for some honest thrills rather than blood-splashing gratuity. Extras include audio-commentary and a behind-the-scenes featurette.

—Rob Freese

MOJAVE (2015)정정 1/2

D: William Monahan, Oscar Isaac, Garrett Hedlund, Leslie Burdette, Mark Wahlberg, Walton Goggins, Danna Rancere 93 mins. (Lionsgate) 4/36

In this stepped-down variation on Robert Altman's far superior *The Player* (now available in a bonus-laden Criterion Collection Blu-ray edition), Hedlund plays Thomas, an arrogant, mega-successful yet ill-defined filmmaker whose narcissistic pursuit into the trailer desert leads him face to face with philosophical sociopath Jack (Isaac), sort of a deranged blend of Dennis Hop-

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IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 3D

per and Henry Lee Lucas, a stand-in for Thomas' own unexamined dark side. When that encounter inadvertently leads to Thomas killing a local cop, Jack stalks the guilty party even as the latter attempts to cover up his crime. Many mad games ensue, getting the resourceless filmmaker against his bright but tragically damaged duelist nemesis. While Isaac, late of the brilliant *Ex Machina* (VS #96) and *Inside Llewyn Davis*, gives his all, *Mojave*, scripted and directed by *The Departed* screenwriter Monahan, projects an inescapable sense of déjà vu, for all the film's undeniable polish. We've been down this road before with far more satisfying results. Wahlberg and Goggins provide thespian wallpaper as Hollywood stereotypes—the ex-drug dealer producer and quietly conning agent, respectively—while Rancere takes on Whispers (Gibber's) *The Player* role as the femme detective leading the murder investigation, sans the latter's eccentric edge. While watchable, this chatty on-and-mouse caper fails to linger in the mind after the end credits roll. Extras include a making-of featurette and deleted scenes.

—The Phantom

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PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES (2016) [PG-13]

D: Four Stars Lily James, Sam Riley, Jack Huston, Bella Heathcote, Douglas Booth, Lena Headey, Charles Dance 108 mins (Sony Pictures) 5/16

Don't believe what you've heard: the year's biggest flop, while certainly no masterpiece, is a much better movie than you might think. As a book, *Pride* was a surprise hit in 2009. The trashy book Jane Austen's romantic classic of 19th-century literature and received additional acclaim in which the story's heroes fought attacks by naysaying critics in between tea time and their never-ending search for husbands. The book, which credits both Austen and its creator Seth Grahame-Smith as co-writers, reached number three on *The New York Times* Best Seller list. Grahame-Smith was promptly declared the genre's new savior—and he wrote the screenplay for Tim Burton's big-screen adaptation of *Dark Shadows*. DS fans were enraged when the cheesy, sometimes campy but still brilliantly written house-themed soap was turned into a clunky parody designed to strike Johnny Depp's monstrous ego. **P&P&Z** is a much, much better movie than *Dark Shadows* could ever hope to be. The elegantly shot period piece captures both the flavor of Austen and the very things that make zombie movies so much fun. And the cast, many of them veterans of British costume dramas, is superb. They treat the subject matter seriously. The mere idea of **P&P&Z** is hilarious, and there are scenes that will have audiences laughing—for all the right reasons. It's particularly amusing to see the ladies hiding their knives underneath their stockings and petticoats. Fans will find no doubt cheer sequences in which the heroines take on the undead with a little kung-fu fighting while still clad in their pre-Victorian flairs—how often is it that women are given heroic roles as monster flicks? Much of what pleases folks about Austen is still there. Beloved characters like Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are still searching for love—Austen lovers will recognize many of their lines. The well-done zombie scenes flow in and out of Austen's original prose with ease. As a producer notes in a bonus interview, Grahame-Smith obviously knows his source material well. Refreshingly, the film also allows its actors to interact with each other on actual sets, as opposed to other recent films that overdo the CGI and become little more than glorified video games. There are, however, a number of silly action sequences and some rather disturbing shots of the walking dead: the sight of a zombie moon-cradling her zombie baby is particularly memorable. So what went wrong? Why did people stay away? Who knows? **P&P&Z** is a fun, well-made, strongly acted movie. Give it a chance.

—David-Elijah Nahmod

SPOTLIGHT (2015) [PG-13]

D: Tom McCarthy Mark Ruffalo, Michael Keaton, Rachel McDermott, Laes Scheider, John Slattery, Stanley Tucci, Neil Huff, Billy Crudup 128 mins. (Universal Studios Home Entertainment) 2/16

In 2001, *The Boston Globe* got a new editor, Marty Baron (Scheider), a newcomer to Boston and a Jew, a newspaperman eager to sell papers who trips over a banned column about priest sex abuse and, ignorant of the political and cultural clout of Boston Catholic clergy, decides at his very first editorial meeting that the investigative Spotlight team will honor the Church. This is a great tale of schadenfreude and the underdog and, as a finale to *All The President's Men*, may be the last newspaper story ever told. Newspapers are already under pressure and the staff team cuts, but dogged reporter Mike Razzullo (Ruffalo), along with Sacha Pfeiffer (McDermott), led by Walter "Robby" Robinson (Keaton) and Ben Bradlee, Jr. (Slattery), operate in their own world, and it's enjoyable to watch them connect the dots. There's dedicated, cynical lawyer Mitchell Garabedian (Tucci) who's been taking the cases of abuse victims for years and has proven able to show for it. Phil Sargano (Huff), head of SNAP (Survivor's Network of Those Abused by Priests), pontifical and impatient, shows up waving a binder of *Globe* clippings going back years that Robinson, shame-faced, has to admit were written to obscure and, with his misgivings, purposely buried in back pages. The team needs a priest and thanks it's got its story, but Baron wants to go after the system. Richard Sipe, noted priest sex abuse researcher and author, is on the phone with his production that six percent of the priests are abusers. The team gets introduced to an AOL program and, tracking priests temporarily as "insurance" or "retiree," uncovers 87 abusers. This is a chase movie, and the clash of belief systems and subsequent tumbling of the status quo—Cardinal Bernard Law, who knew of the abuse, covered it up and was eventually forced to resign—is the satisfying part of this story. Last satisfying is the portrayal of the characters. At times, they're one-dimensional or unlikable because they operate strictly according to the norms of their professional roles. Who were the victims? Priests preyed mostly on low-income boys with absentee fathers from broken homes. Who were the abusers? Enormously stupid men who found in the Church an endlessly self-protecting haven for damaged people. Extra: *Uncovering the Truth: A Spotlight Team Roundtable: Spotlight: A Look Inside, and The State of Journalism*.

—Nancy Naglin

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN (2015) [PG-13]

D: Paul McGreggan Daniel Radcliffe, James McAvoy, Jessica Brown Findlay, Freddie Fox, Andrew Scott, Charles Dance, Spencer Wilding 110 mins. (20th Century Fox Home Entertainment) 3/16



This latest remake of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (how many have there been now?) is all dressed up with no place to go. Set in 19th-century London, *Victor Frankenstein* borrows lavishly sets and costumes and, in part, resembles a big-budget Hammer production. It's a beautiful-looking film with a lot of promise, ruined by bad direction. McAvoy plays the mad doctor as though he were in the midst of a bipolar disorder related manic episode, hysterically screaming every line, which becomes annoying rather quickly. Did the doc forget to take his meds? This time the story is told from the point of view of lab assistant Igor, who's presented as a handsome romantic lead in the person of Harry Potter's Radcliffe. I suppose the filmmakers needed to take a "fresh" approach in order to make this version "interesting," but the promise of Igor as a heartbreaker fails strangely out of place. No flash of kindness, who's a fine actor, but there's only so much he can do with bad writing. Devious Abby's Findlay, a fine actress, is wasted as Igor's love interest. Her character is barely developed, and her storyline inside this tower makes her laughable the idea of Igor as a romantic lead actually is. Dance, a great actor with a long list of credits in film and classical theater, surfaces briefly as Victor's angry father, who appears out of nowhere to tell Victor what a disappointment he is. Dad then disappears. Where did he come from? Where did he go? And why is this silly film set in London? *Victor Frankenstein* borrows not one but two monsters, neither of which lives longer than a few minutes. Both are computer generated. Though lovely to look at in parts, *Victor Frankenstein* will leave you yearning for the classic Universal Monsters, or for Peter Jackson's delightful mad doctor scenes for Hammer. Fox's sparse Blu-ray is a disappointment. The only extras are a few deleted scenes. [C]

—David-Elijah Nahmod

The Phantom's BEST OF THE NEW WEST

FORSAKEN (2015) 8/8/8

D. Jon Casar (Kiefer Sutherland), Donald Sutherland, Brian Cox, Dean Cain, Michael Wincott, Aaron Poole, Joany Ross 90 mins. (Monument Films) 3/16

Forsaken lopes along with a satisfying sense of Kubrick-like inevitability, leaving its traditional spaghetti-ropes contained in its frontier tale of familial redemption and reluctant revenge. Kiefer plays John Henry Clayton, a violence-weary Civil War vet and notorious gambler who returns to his old hometown to set things right with his disappearing preacher father Rev. William Clayton (real-life dad Donald). Naturally, it's not long before our hero's home state, back at the frontier, poor but honest locals are being bullied and beaten into selling their land at the command of increasingly eloquent railroad man James McCordy (a suitably oily Cox), whose band of enforcers include professional gunman Confederate Dave Turner (a regal Wincott) and trigger-happy psychopath Frank Tillman (a somewhat over-the-top Poole). While a determinedly peaceful John Henry suffers no end of verbal and physical abuse at the hands of the hostile locals, he also finds time to subdue a littererous confrontation with low-life Mary Alice (Cain), now assumed to Tim Watson (Ross), one of the independent ranchers being pressured by the bad guys. Under the supervision of TV emigre producer/director Casar (of *24* fame), working from vet writer Brad Mirman's genre-relevant script, *Forsaken* succeeds as an unimpressive throwback to the straightforward action of yore, liberally borrowing elements from past westerns ranging from George Stevens' *Shane* to Sara Puckett's feature debut *The Deadly Companion* (VS 896) to Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*. Sutherland's part in the film is both at the top of their respective thespian games here, manning the parent from silent scheming to lung-challenging intensity. Nor does *Forsaken* start on the action, peppering its domestic drama with copious bloody fistfights and lethal gunplay. If you're a fan of old-school action, *Forsaken* runs a solid bet. Extras include a making-of featurette.

THE HATEFUL EIGHT (2015) 8/8/8

Quentin Tarantino, Samuel L. Jackson, Kurt Russell, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Walton Goggins, Dennis Quaid, Tim Roth, Michael Madsen, Bruce Dern 168 mins. (Anchor Bay Entertainment) 3/16

Topping even his dazzling Civil War revenge fantasy *Bloodthirsty Django* (Unleashed) (VS 887), Tarantino serves aural bonanzas with scorching wit, gory gunplay, scorching racial tensions and gripping suspense as what emerges as one of the best westerns of any era. The titular group consists of bounty hunter John Ruth (Russell), Leigh as his feisty female prisoner Daisy Domergue (in and to '90s actress and Howard Hughes patroness Faith Domergue), a crackling Jackson as rival bounty hunter and ex-Union officer Major Marquis Warren (a salute to erstwhile action director Charles Marquis Warren, of *Little Big Man*, *Hombre* and *Trooper* Hook fame), self-proclaimed sheriff Chas Mainer (Goggins), hanger-on Oswald Mobley (Roth), cowboy Joe Gage (Madsen), handyman Bob (Leigh) and former Confederate General Sandy Smithers (Denn). All eight, plus non-singing stage driver O.B. (James [Son of Tarantino regular Michael] Parks), hole up in Minnie's Haberdashery, a general store/salon in a remote frozen Wyoming outpost to await the passing of a punishing snow storm before continuing on their various ways. As expected, heated frictions quickly erupt among the various factions and individuals, some of whom may be hiding under fictitious identities. To reveal any more would be to risk ruining some of the movie's surprises in store as writer-director Tarantino twists and turns his fractious characters through a kaleidoscope of wingers, set to a raucous, eclectic spaghetti-western-flavored score by iconic outlawsman Burt Yost (aka Ennio Morricone). *Morricone* later capped a well-deserved Best Original Score Oscar for his steaming work here, while Leigh and Robert Richardson earned equally meritorious Best Supporting Actress and Best Cinematography noms.) Tarantino and Richardson tossed *The Hateful Eight* in the vintage greenhouse *Thru* format for extra wilderness warmth and released it during the 2015 Christmas season in select midnight engagements, even though, as his oft-be pointed out, the action usually unfolds within a single indoor set. Anchor Bay issues the shorter wide-spread version in its Blu-ray + DVD + Digital HD two-disc set, hopefully, the roadshow edition will surface in the near future. Extras include a very brief behind-the-scenes featurette and Sam Jackson's Guide to *Glorious Thru* Part The *Hateful Eight* with *Django Unleashed* for a double bill to die for, to go the marathon route, add one of QJ's main source inspirations, Andre T. Tash's 1959 snowed-in frontier tale *Day of the Outlaw* (VS 867), now available via Timeless Media.

THE REVENANT (2015) 8/8/8

D. Alejandro G. Iñárritu, Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hardy, Dommon Gleeson, Will Poulter, Forest Goodluck, Lukas Haas 156 mins. (20th Century Fox) 4/16

DiCaprio takes multiple beatings, keeps on fighting and eventually looks back as real-life frontier explorer Hugh Glass in Iñárritu's *Revenge*.



though frequently often epic. Following a viciously staged battle with hostile Native-American, the beleaguered survivors of Glass's burning party, including our hero's half-breed son Hawk (Goodluck), struggle to escape to safety. A rain-soaked encounter with an angry anonymous bear soon leaves Glass barely alive and in the treacherous custody of perennially disgruntled John Fitzgerald (Hardy), who, over the protest of decent young cohort Bridger (Poulter), decides to abandon his severely wounded leader to the mercy of a brutal Colorado winter. A large section of the film plays like a sort of *Passions of the Christ Goes West*, as we watch the battered, nearly immobile Glass sew his own gaping wounds, use a breast-out-open casket as a shelter, ramble down snow banks, and suffer beyond other expensively rendered features. A group of scary, unimpaired French-Caucasian trappers adds to the violent chaos, as does a questing band of Native-Americans (sort of the *Epistle of John Ford's The Searchers*). Can Glass make his way to a distant fort and settle his beef with Fitzgerald? It's well worth your time to find out as a film that features excellent performances by all, though most impressively by the character-knapper Hardy, who, like fellow *Thru* thug Christian Bale and Christoph Waltz, can move virtually any screen person through his way, as well as the Oscar-winning DiCaprio, and Ennio Morricone (who Gleeson is an outstanding one) officer that the real star here is Tarantino (Gritty). Tarantino's magical cinematography, which transports us to what appears to be another planet, one utterly mesmerizing in its audacious bleak beauty. As for Oscar-winning director/co-writer Iñárritu, he fully means for his sublimely pretentious, extravagantly over-the-top exercise in anti-morose *Revenge* or (the *Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance*) that had incomprehensibly beguiled award voters the year before. Extras include the documentary *A World Unseen* 3/

**Rob Freese's
BEST OF THE
SPAGHETTI WEST**

WILD EAST PRODUCTIONS
(1978-95 DVD) 2/16

GARRINGO (1969) 8/8

D. Rafael Romero Marchent, Anthony Saffien, Peter Lee Lawrence, Saverio Staling, Jose Rodolfo, Luis Mena, 92 mins

As a child, Johnny witnessed his father's brutal murder at the hands of a cruel Army lieutenant. Blamed by the town sheriff (Rodolfo), Johnny (Lawrence) is now known to the townspeople as an upstanding young man, but he has a murderous alter ego who stalks army officers, killing them successfully and laying their bodies on his father's grave. Doggedly hunted Garringo (Saffien) is offered a deal: he can catch the unknown killer or rot away in prison. Garringo takes the deal and is soon on the trail, figuring Johnny for his man. No doubt, this is an all-around excellent western revenge tale, with Saffien perfectly paired with Lawrence as his adversary. Saffien is quiet cool, staying in the shadows while on his hunt. Lawrence is loud and abrasive, calling attention to himself with a kinetic energy that serves most of the townspeople into silence. Marchent keeps the action moving at a quick pace on the way to a more than satisfying finale. Released: *Spaceland as Dead Are Countless*.

TWO CROSSES AT DANGER PASS
(1967) 8/8

D. Rafael Romero Marchent, Peter Marrell, Anthony Freeman, Nereo Corbelli, Luis Gaspar, Armando Cifra, Maria Cruz, 91 mins

In another traumatic childhood tragedy, little Alex Mitchell witnesses the death of his sheriff father by an angry lynch mob led by wealthy scam-brother Morris (Calvo). Alex's little sister Judy is taken by Morris and forced into servitude. Alex is raised by a Quaker couple who preach peace and forgiveness, but revenge burns in little Alex's heart until he's old enough to get out on his own and track down Morris. Mark (Ginger), Alex's adoptive Quaker brother, follows in an attempt to keep Alex from committing the sins of violence and murder. Early on, Alex is influenced by Mark and gets his revenge deceptively on the wealthy family, but when his sister Judy (Cruz) is taken hostage by Morris's son Chas (Freeman), it turns into an all-out sin-a-mas of bullets and bloodshed. Two Crosse boasts some bedazzling shootouts, red set pieces of raw western action, but the constantly escalating revenge



plot, especially when Chasly joins in, starts to become a little redundant. In fact, although you're rooting for Alex, he becomes so consumed with constant vengeance you start hoping someone shoots him or at least punches him in the throat or something. Enjoyable and worth a watch, but too much vengeance sucks some of the fun out of it. Marchent's real name is Piero Marrellanza, while Freeman was actually christened Mason Neville.

As always, Wild East complements its crop, widescreen presentation of both films with multiple international trailers, picture galleries and a great interview with director Marchent.

**BEST OF THE WEST
WARNER ARCHIVE**

(1971-95 DVD) 3/16

STATION WEST (1948) 8/8

D. Sidney Lanfield, Dick Powell, Jane Greer, Agnes Moorehead, Gordon Clift, Steve Brodie, Raymond Burr, 80 mins

While *Station West* boasts excellent action and a strong cast, the hard-boiled postwar noir tale and poster (none of the latter admittedly quirk-witz) doesn't always translate to the Old West setting. Powell basically reprises his *Murder, My Sweet* Philip Marlowe persona, with a first-shooter sailing for a south-west revolver, as a wisecracking undercover army officer accepting a job on a stage line that's being victimized by ruthless bandits out to steal government gold. Greer also seems more in sync with her previous year's *Out of the Past* character; she's out here as a sassy saloon owner mixed up with the town's evil element. Burr is quite good as a cowardly crooked lawyer who gets caught in the crossfire between the law and the lawless. *Station West* is well worth seeing but might have been better had it decided which genre to more fully embrace. 8/

—The Phantom

**THE COENS'
CLASSIC COMEDY
CORNER**

HAIL, CAESAR! (2016) 8/8

D. Joel Coen & Ethan Coen, Josh Brolin, George Clooney, Alden Ehrenreich, Ralph Fiennes, Jonah Hill, Scarlett Johansson, Wayne Knight, Frances McDormand, Veronica Osorio, Fisher Stevens, Tilda Swinton, Channing Tatum, 106 mins (Universal Studios Home Entertainment) 6/16

And speaking of cowboys, young Ehrenreich (dub of Woody Allen's *Blue Jasmine*) totally nails apparently naive, lurch-ovring, Sunset Boulevard B-western hero Hobie Doyle, one of many colorful dream factory characters who peruse through the Coens' brilliant new Hollywood comedy. This year is 1951, an annum that finds the film far better by many cuts, a rapidly expanding television threat, and a lurking Red Menace that allegedly has its sinister claws deep in the heart of the industry. Attempting to control the ambient chaos is studio's studio fixer Eddie Mannix (loosely inspired by the real life enforcer earlier played in a more daggish manner by Bob Haskins in Allan Coates' speculative *George (Superman)* Reeves biopic *Hollywoodland* [VS 8/2]). A devout Catholic and confessional addict, Mannix has his hands full overseeing production on the studio's "prestige picture" *Hail, Caesar!*, a New Testament epic he fears may offend various finicky religious factions (a thread highlighted by Robert Duvall's turn as a cruddy rabbi) and reaping in its notoriously self-indulgent, extravagantly stupid star (Brolin) *Whodunnit* (a dead-on Clooney), who's paragonically kidnapped by a cadre of Communist saboteurs. Also in the mix are gosh Hailch director Lawrence Laurent (a very funny Fiennes, who shares a hilarious dressing-room drama rehearsal with a woefully miscast Holsie), vulgar Esther Williams clone (DeAnna Mesa (Johansson), who scores a wonderful mock, aquatic number, Gwyneth Paltrow-style director Tim Gurney (Tatum), counterpart of a killer homosexual sailor hotel staged at the Swagart (Daghy C) saloon, Swinton as competitive twin gossip columnists Thorne and Elizabeth Thacker, obviously modeled on Lucille Parsons and Hedda Hopper, and McDormand in a head but classic but as a chain-smoking film editor who falls afoul of a acutely lethal movieola. *Wish*, the Coens thrillingly capture the ebb and flow of a pivotal Transition year in a pitch-perfect send up served with just the right blend of acid and affection. Boons features on Universal's Blu-ray include a quartet of fun behind-the-scenes featurettes. *Directing Hollywood, An Era of Glamour, Magic of a Hypnotic Era and The Stars Align*. If you love movies, you'll definitely *Hail, Caesar!* 8/

—The Phantom

BEST OF THE FESTS: 17TH JEONJU INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

By Joseph Perry

The city of Jeonju, South Korea, played host to the 17th Jeonju International Film Festival (JIFF) from April 28-May 7 this year, and though the fest unfortunately screened far fewer horror and science fiction films than in past years, it wasn't lacking in tense thrillers and evocative documentaries about genre filmmakers.

Lacile Hadjilovlevic's French horror drama *Evolution* (2015) ensnares viewers in its ethereal, secluded world while simultaneously keeping us at an emotional distance from the proceedings. Several young boys live on an island with their mothers. One of these boys, 10-year-old Nicolas (Max Brebant), swims by himself in the sea and spies what he thinks is the body of a dead boy. His mother (Julie-Marie Parmentier) makes him promise that he will never swim alone again and then, after her own exploratory dive, remains keen that there is no corpse there. Nicolas tries to convince his friends that something is wrong with the mother, and the boys soon find themselves uncovering some disturbing happenings in the island's decidedly low-tech hospital. The proceedings get increasingly bizarre, and Hadjilovlevic manages to balance growing tension with a touch-pet feeling in a David Cronenberg-by-way-of-H.P.-Lovecraft vein. *Evolution*, a full of lush visuals and peppered with shots that will make some viewers turn away from the screen. The fest learned about this enigmatic film before seeing it, the better to be prepared to think about its oblique themes long after the end credits roll. This was the only horror film shown at this year's JIFF besides the 1973 Vincent Price vehicle *Theatre of Blood*, which screened as part of the festival's "Special Focus: Shockgore" in Cinema series.



JIFF featured three documentaries about filmmakers close to the hearts of genre-movie fans: *Hitchcock/Truffaut*, *De Palma*, and *The 1,000 Eyes of Dr. Maddin* (France/USA, 2015) is a marvelous look at the series of interviews that François Truffaut conducted with Alfred Hitchcock, the results of which was the groundbreaking 1966 book that shares the same title as this film. Using audio and photographs from these interviews, scenes from films by both master auteurs, and commentary from modern American and French directors, this documentary is a gem for cinephiles as well as a fantastic introduction to the two filmmakers and to film theory for novices. Such current luminaries as Milla Sproston, Paul Schrader, Wes Anderson, David Fincher, and Olivier Assayas provide input and perspective. The film looks at Hitchcock's entire body of work, with anecdotes from the master himself that will bring smiles to viewers. This charming effort is the type of documentary that reminds cineastes why we love movies so much, and I can't recommend it highly enough.

Filmmaker Noah Buschbach and Jake Poltre also strike gold with their documentary *De Palma* (USA, 2015), in which Brian De Palma discusses his entire film career from his *Sarah Lawrence* days to the recent heyday of the 1970s producer-driven 1980s, his biggest commercial success with *Mission Impossible* in the 1990s, and his most recent efforts. *De Palma* is candid and funny and just as willing to talk about his underperformers and what he learned from them as it is about his more successful efforts. The documentary consists of a single interview with glib, off-the-top-of-his-head answers and some from his influences and peers as well. Some celebrity gossip and behind-the-scenes tales—such as being offered *Flashdance*, which misfired hard—along with fascinating insight into the art and business of filmmaking round out the documentary. *De Palma* is highly recommended viewing for those well-versed in the director's work as well as those unfamiliar with him, and for anyone interested in filmmaking.

The 1,000 Eyes of Dr. Maddin (France/USA, 2015) takes a far more of an unusual approach to its subject, but then, what else might be expected of a documentary about Canadian auteur Guy Maddin and his deliciously offbeat films that harken back to silent and early sound cinema? Director Yves Montmayre presents a splendid though brief (65 minutes) glimpse into Maddin's creative process, as well as some biographical background, including how his growing up in Winnipeg influenced his cinematic output. Maddin gives a great deal of insight into his filmmaking philosophy, discussing the importance of dream logic and likening the experience of watching his films to that of being moved by music rather than focusing on linear narrative. The need behind such avant-garde efforts as *The*

HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO
TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD?

WE MONSTERS



Forbidden Room (which screened at last year's JIFF and is now available via Kino Lorber) and *The Saddest Music in the World* is as playful in interviews and behind-the-scenes footage here as he is with his films. Maddin uses very humor and occasional. To be putting our legs? remains in great effect. Plenty of interview footage is on display from each Maddin cast member as Isabelle Roussillon and Udo Kier to filmmaker John Waters, Stephen and Timothy Quay, and Kenneth Anger. Film clips from each Maddin influences as Fritz Lang and Luis Buñuel help round out this inquiry into the Canadian auteur's film philosophy. *The 1,000 Eyes of Dr. Maddin* is required viewing for staunch Maddin supporters that should hopefully turn some new viewers on to his bold, unique efforts as well.

The German psychological thriller *We Monsters* (Wir Monster 2015, First Run Features) examines the increasingly downward spiral of events that happens to a separated couple when their teenage daughter Sarah (Jenna Foster) tells her father Paul (Moritz Mohr) that she murdered her good friend Charlie (Marie Bönigk). Paul tries to turn Sarah in but second-guesses himself in the police station parking lot and decides to think of another plan. Mother Christine (Ulrike C. Tschernig) goes involved as a web of lies, deceit, and deliberately misplaced blame grows ever larger with progressively horrifying results. Sarah at first shows little remorse for what she has confessed to and then none at all; the sad and other elements to her character are provided. *We Monsters* with some intriguing social commentary. The performances are terrific and director Sebastian Ka (who co-wrote the dark screenplay with Marcus Sobott) keeps the dial coming at an impressive clip.

The somber psychological thriller **Reminder** (UK/Germany, 2015) tells me something my head as I tried in vain to neatly wrap up all of the story elements. I'm not so sure that a second viewing would clarify matters any, but the film is certainly worth watching. Rather early protagonist Tom (Tom Sturridge) has plenty of reasons to act the way he does, having been struck on the head by a large piece of debris from high overhead and left both mentally and physically crippled. Initially, he can't remember anything before the accident, which, conveniently, is exactly what the company responsible is paying him the equivalent of almost \$10 million to forget. Tom uses this newfound wealth to recreate in painstaking detail the scattered bits of his past that slowly come to him, eventually purchasing a particular London apartment block and populating it with actors who portray, for example, an old woman who cooks for him, a pianist who plays Chopin, and masked people representing faces that he cannot recall. Characters and viewers are left to wonder how many of these alleged memories are actual ones and how many might be the products of dreams or fantasy, and that is part of the fun in going along for this ride. Boasting intriguing performances, seen thus, being the film's modest budget, and deft helming by Oscar Fao (who adapted the screenplay from Tom K. McCarthy's cult novel of the same name), **Reminder** offers plenty of philosophy, psychology, and social commentary, as well as an entertaining surface story that kept me engaged throughout. Fans of such thoughtful mindbenders as *Memoria* and *Mindhunter* Dr. should find plenty to enjoy in **Reminder**.

The Treasure (Czechoslovakia, 2015) is a Romanian-French ditty with slow-burn super elements. The focus is mostly on whether a get-rich-quick scheme involving an old relic of buried treasure will pay off. There are some humorous scenes that mostly take place when Costi (Tomu Cuzin) helps his neighbor Adrian (Adrian Pintilie) dig for treasure allegedly buried by Adrian's grandfather during World War II. The two men are aided by professional metal detector Cornel (Cornelia Cosoi) in a delightful turn. Writer-director Cornelia Pomatoiu weaves his film with a considerable amount of Romanian history and social commentary. The humor is very, and the pacing sometimes a bit unusual, but fans of offbeat foreign cinema would do well to give **The Treasure** a try.

The Argentinian crime drama/thriller **The Clan** (El Clan, 2015) is a top-notch effort from writer-director Pablo Trapero based on the true story of the Puccio family from Buenos Aires, which kidnaped and murdered victims from wealthy families in the 1980s. Guillermo Francella is superb as Argemundo Puccio, the dedicated father who dates on his

children and, finding himself unemployed, after his work with the state's intelligence services dries up, decides to make money via kidnapping. He comes his mighty-son son Alejandro (Peter Lanzani) is an outstanding performance) who helps him abduct one of the young man's own friends as the first victim. Alejandro has no idea that his father plans to kill the friend after collecting the ransom, but really hits some rough. He continues to assist his father in the crimes but thinks better of it when he meets and falls in love with

Monica (Sofía Giccioli). Family business such as these are never easy to leave, actually, as Alejandro discovers. Many other interesting characters, both within the family and without, are on hand in this gripping tale, but the details would drift into spoiler territory. Suffice it to say that Trapero has crafted one of the best films I have seen so far this year, a gripping effort bolstered by his chilling portrayal of the despicable yet complex Argemundo.

The Johnny To-produced Hong Kong crime thriller *Trivium* (2016) introduces three new directorial talents—Frank Hui, Jeremy Au, and Vicky Wang. The story, based on the real-life conspiracy unfolds in early 1997, just before the Hong Kong transfer of sovereignty to China. A rumor starts about the possibility of three Mafioso underworld legends joining forces to land a big score before the end of British rule; however, the men—bitch and flamboyant Cheuk Tuck-king (Jordan Chan), formerly powerful but now growing Yip Kwai-don (Rach Lee), and cold opportunist Kwa Chang-hung (Jordan Lee)—are unaware of the rumor. Once they get wind of it, they consider the possibilities and have differing attitudes about such a team-up. Trapped in philosophical crises as they consider their futures in changing times, the criminals make choices that could well lead to their undoing. Although well-detailed overall, there are occasionally uneven bits, and Chan plays his role with perhaps too broad of a comic brush. There is a great deal of talent both behind and in front of the camera in *Trivium*, though, which makes it worth a watch.

My favorite offering at this year's JIFF—and one of my favorite films of the year so far—is the cinema verité/docus footage conspiracy thriller comedy **Operation Avalanche** (Canada/USA, 2006) directed by Matt Johnson and co-written by Johnson with Josh Bales, both of whom also act in the film, playing characters who share their real names. (The duo worked together on 2013's **The Derties** on the same caper.) Fictional



Conspirators abound in Johnson and Bales' **Operation Avalanche**

Johnson and Bales are part of a fledgling group of big-budgeters recruited by the CIA in 1967 as part of its A/V program. Johnson keeps trying to get the group increasingly important assignments and manages to talk some superiors into letting them attempt to uncover a Russian mole within NASA by posing as a documentary film crew. This snowballs into Johnson eventually making a pitch to help out a behind-schedule NASA by faking the Apollo 11 moon landings. Fellow A/V program member Owen Williams finds his friendship and professional relationship with Johnson at odds when it becomes obvious that the latter hasn't been completely honest with the rest of the group. Johnson and Bales—the real filmmakers—take one of the most infamous conspiracy theories of modern times and run with it, adding their own unique twist to devise an original work that incorporates pieces of existing theories while offering something fresh and exciting. For example, Stanley Kubrick is indeed involved here but not in the way most conspiracy theorists tell it. Real-life Johnson, Bales, and crew infiltrated both NASA and Shipment Studios to shoot footage for **Operation Avalanche**; this meta approach only adds to the film's ingenuity and intrigue. The pseudo-documentary, found footage, film-like approach works perfectly for this story, and Johnson's attention to period detail and incorporation of actual NASA footage are superb. Balancing humor and white-knuckle tension is no easy feat, but Johnson and his crew pull it off splendidly.

The South Korean government declared an extreme national holiday shortly before JIFF began, giving most people in the country a previously unprecedented four-day weekend that coincided with the first a final four days. This helped the festival set a new record for sold-out screenings. Each year I hope that JIFF will offer more films of interest to genre-film fans, but the numbers decrease instead. With some investigating and chance-taking, however, I put this story of 10 films together and found that the trip was well worth my time. ☺

**david j. moore's
ACTION ACES:
LOU FERRIGNO**

Best known for portraying the gruff, enraged Hulk on the popular TV series *The Incredible Hulk* (1977-1982), Lou Ferrigno has had a postgraduate career as a professional body-builder (well documented in the 1977 film *Pumping Iron*), where he won several major titles, including Mr. Universe (1980) and Mr. America. His films *Cage*, *Liberty and Death* (both 1989), and *Cage II* (1994) were mainstays of the VHS era and he starred in several second-and-tertiary titles like Cannon's *Bercules* (1983). To this day, Ferrigno remains a fixture in topics of bodybuilding, Marvel Comics, and action films. —*djm*

david j. moore: You have fans who have said as The Incredible Hulk: The role will follow you into the Marvel Universe movies when you provide the voice of The Hulk. Can you address how this role has shaped the course of your destiny and career?

LOU FERRIGNO: As a secretary in Brooklyn, with 80% hearing loss, I looked up to *The Incredible Hulk* comics as a kid. We all have a little bit of Hulk inside of us but it's as is to find that strength to move forward with it in a successful way. I knew I succeeded when I moved to Santa Monica and got my long-awaited bodybuilding contract with Joe Weider in the '70s. Being given the opportunity to play The Hulk a few years later was a game changer and a past I've lived I was ready to play—mentally, physically and spiritually. It changed my life. It is a role that I am very proud of to this day.

djm: Can you talk a little bit about the challenges you had when you were younger and trying to cross over into film and television when it was very rare for athletes—much less bodybuilders—to "make it" in Hollywood?

LF: I couldn't play contact sports as a kid because of my hearing loss, so I began to train individually. I did this to empower myself, build muscle and keep the kids that would constantly bully me worried that I would retaliate one day. I always wanted to have the strength of The Hulk that I read about in my comics, but becoming the actor that ended up being known as the Hulk to this day is something I never imagined happening. They picked me because I knew what inside Bruce Banner The Hulk, what made him tick and what it took to play the role from the inside out. I had years of preparation looking up and growing with the character. What is "tick"? Preparation meets opportunity. Always be prepared and give it your 110% when it arrives!

djm: Would you like to say a few words about some of the experiences you made in some notable TV shows like The Fall Guy, Night Court, and The King of Queens?

LF: They were all classic shows and I had a great time on every appearance. My seven years on *The King of Queens* were my favorite. To this day, no one makes me laugh harder than Kevin James. He's a great guy and one of my favorites.

djm: You've made some interesting turns over the years. Personally, I think your performance on Cage is the best you've ever given. Can you talk a little bit about portraying an emotionally damaged and disabled Vietnam vet?

LF: That role was one of my favorites as well. With *Cage* I was given the opportunity to show the range I have as an actor. I spent a lot of time with veterans that had just come home from war and I learned a lot about their newfound hopes and struggles. I integrated everyone I met into my character.

djm: The request to Cage was more fight-oriented, but it still gave you a chance to act a bit beyond the action. Do you have any measures you'd like to share about working on that aspect?

LF: It was great getting to know Bruce Lee's daughter Shannon and working with her on the script. What a father she had! She had a great heart and spirit about her as well.

djm: I grew up watching a number of your films, namely The Seven Magnificent Gladiators, Hercules, and Sentinel of the Seven Seas. I still enjoy watching those movies. Do you have any fond memories about working on these films?

LF: I loved working in Italy. It was a theme that they chose to do my voice in *Hercules*. That was unnecessary and it would have been much more of a choice if they hadn't. Regardless, I loved the cast and the environment of every production I was on.

djm: Can you talk a little bit about your training on sword fighting or your sword-and-scurvy movies? How are your sword skills?

LF: I did a lot of sword training for those roles. I always enjoy taking roles that I can learn a new craft on.

djm: Say something about working with some of these gorgeous actresses like Sybil Danning, Ingrid Anderson, Mariela D'Angelo, Abby Cadabby, and Susan Vessels.

LF: Those were great women to work with. They have had good hearts, had great work ethics, and they didn't act like spoiled divas like you hear about today with Hollywood actresses.

djm: You recently had a supporting role as The Scorpion King 4. What was it like for you to



revist the sword-and-scurvy genre? Would you be willing to come back to do another film in this genre if the opportunity presented itself?

LF: Always! I'm 100% Ferrigno Fit and at 64 I'm always ready for battle.

djm: The trailer for your new movie Instant Death is incredible. It's the action movie I've always wished you'd done. The trailer by itself makes up for a lot of lost time in your career where you were only appearing in supporting roles. Are in Liberty and Death and Hercules.

LF: It's a movie that I'm really proud of. I show an immense amount of heart, passion, and vulnerability in the role. I had an amazing director named Ara Paizya, and that was a huge gift! I gave it my all and filmed day and night for over a month in England last summer.

djm: Do you think this could be the beginning of a bold new direction for you as an action star?

LF: It's just the beginning! You don't work this hard and look this good at 64 to have this be your finale now!

djm: Tell us a little bit about your fitness apparel brand.

LF: My daughter and I have an amazing lifestyle fitness and apparel brand called Ferrigno FIT that celebrates positive, healthy living. I also have a bodybuilding show every year, the Ferrigno Legacy, that we've been really successful with.

djm: What would you like to say to your fans?

LF: Thanks for all the kind words and information over the years. I promise to only get better. With out you I would not be here. It's going to be a great 2016! 🙌

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DOCTOR WHO: SERIES 9, PART 1 (2015) 8½ hrs

D. Vancos, Peter Capaldi, Jenna Coleman, Michelle Gomez, Julian Bleach, Mance Williams. 270 mins

Having celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2013, the BBC's *Doctor Who* has gained a significant following in the U.S. since it was relaunched in 2005. *Series 9* brings back the multi-episode format in a big way. These first six of the 12 regular episodes are all two-parters. In the season premiere, *The Magician's Apprentice* and *The Witch's Familiar*, the revamped Missy (Gomez), aka renegade Time Lord The Master, recruits the Doctor's (Capaldi) Confession Dial, or last will and testament. She uses a brief time trick to flash out Clara (Coleman), so together they can find The Doctor. Also searching for him is Colony Sarff (Jana Rade-Quevedo), the henchman of the evil Dæmons (Bleach), creator of the Daleks. Dying at long last, Dæmons seeks to have a final confrontation with his old nemesis. Finding the Doctor throwing himself a farewell party in Medieval England, Clara and Missy confront him. Sarff tracks him through his friends and brings them all to his master. But, as always, nothing is what it seems with the denigrated scientific genius. Also, we must remember that Missy is capable of unspeakable evil of her own. The story brings back several characters from past episodes for cameo, adding gravitas to an already heavily dramatic op-

isode that takes some inspiration from the Tom Baker era story *Genesis of the Daleks*.

Episodes 3 and 4 introduce a new monster, as well as exploring traditional ghost story tropes. In *Under the Lake*, the TARDES materializes in an underwater base in the near future. The base and its occupants are being haunted by the ghosts of the recent dead, but the Doctor immediately suspects something more is going on. An alien vessel discovered on the lake bed is the key to the mystery. As the lake was created when a dam burst and flooded railway installations, the Doctor must journey to *Before the Flood* to discover the secret of the spacecraft. Traveling back in time, he learns the spaceship is actually a hearse, bearing the body of the conquering alien The Fisher King (Neil Patrick Harris) who isn't nearly as dead as he seems. But, back at the base, Clara and the rest of the crew have a new problem, as another ghost has appeared—the Doctor's. He must rush to defeat the cunning creature, who is using the dead to broadcast a distress signal to his armies, before his own death.

Episodes 5 and 6 introduce new aliens, as well as bringing a new character into the ensemble. In *The Girl Who Died*, the Doctor and Clara are captured by Vikings brought back to their village; they immediately encounter a being claiming to be Odin, the Viking king of the gods. Clara and the chief's daughter, Ashildr (Williams), are taken aboard the alien vessel and, along with all of the village's women, are turned into a liquid concoction of testosterone and adrenaline, which awakes the alien. Ashildr declares war on the aliens, and they are returned to the village to prepare for battle the next day. The Doctor has identified the aliens as The Moai, an unidentified race of warriors. Learning of Ashildr's challenge, the Doctor advises everyone to flee. The Vikings refuse, and the Doctor tries to train them in battle, but these are farmers, blacksmiths, etc., all the fighters were killed in The Moai's first raid. Despairing for her people, Ashildr blames herself for their seeming doom. A crying baby and Ashildr's storytelling capabilities inspire a plan of action so outrageous even Clara refers to it as "nutbush." The plan works but comes with a terrible price: Ashildr's life. The grieving Doctor suddenly remembers where he got his current face—from the man and his family whom he saved from Pompeii on volcano day. Combining a mud chip from a Moai battle helmet, he saves Ashildr's life, but has quite possibly made her immortal as well.

In *The Woman Who Lived*, the Doctor encounters Ashildr in 17th-century England, where she has become the notorious highwayman known as The Nightingale. The Doctor is searching for an alien artifact that has no business being on Earth. At first Ashildr—who now goes by the name



"Me"—believes the Doctor has come for her to bring her on his travels. Realizing that isn't the case, the two set in search of the same thing: a powerful jewel known as The Eyes of Hades. It's a device that can open a portal between dimensions. It's also sought by Leander (Arnyon Bakare), a deposed king from the planet Delta Leonidis, inhabited by leonine humanoid. After the Doctor and Me steal the jewel, Me reveals that it requires a death to activate it. Since rival highwayman Sam Smith (Rufus Hound) has been captured and is about to be hanged, Me plans to use him to open the portal so that the evil Leander can escape Earth together. As the Doctor protests, Leander betrays her and is only killing her focus through to judge the planet. Caring once again about her fellow humans after 800 years of heartbreak and indifference, Me uses her second Moai mud chip to save Smith's life and close the portal. Leander is destroyed by his own kind as the portal closes. Me (who no longer brooks at the Doctor calling her Ashildr) at last realizes why she can't travel with the Doctor: near immortality isn't mortal as compared to remind them of how precious life is, no matter how fleeting. Horrified, Ashildr decides to devote herself to ensuring those the Doctor leaves behind in his wake the even suggests she might suck out Captain Jack Harkness, of *Torchwood* fame! Back in the present, the Doctor regains Clara, who has a surprise for a grateful student of him—and within the surprise is a deeper surprise, from Ashildr! Extras included on BBC Video's two-disc set are three episodes of *Doctor*



DOCTOR WHO: SERIES 9, PART 2
(2018) 5/5/12

D: Vicious. P: Peter Capaldi, Jenna Coleman, Jenna Kolagrove, Mimi Willmott, Ingrid Oliver. M: Matt. (BBC Home Entertainment) 1/16

Series 9 of the revived *Doctor Who* concludes with its more linked episodes: **The Zygon Invasion** (Episode 7 & 8) is another two-part storyline, picking up from 2013's 50th anniversary special **The Day of the Doctor**. For two years, 25 million shape-shifting aliens called Zygons have been living on Earth disguised as humans. The uneasy truce worked out by the Zygon Command and United Intelligence Taskforce (UNIT) leader Kate Lethbridge-Stewart (Kolagrove) has held, but the peace is breaking down as a renegade Zygon faction wants to live openly as aliens. UNIT scientist Oswald (Oliver) and the Doctor (Capaldi) had created a false safe should either side break the truce. **The Oswald Box**. However, Oswald has been taken captive, and UNIT itself has been infiltrated. Worse yet, the Renegade Zygon leader has copied the Doctor's trusted companion, Clara Oswald (Coleman). As the world inches on the edge of inter-species civil war, can the Doctor escape racial intrigue at UNIT and still keep the peace? In **Sleep No More**, a stand-alone story (Episode 9), the Doctor and Clara arrive on a space station where experiments with sleep compression have created a new kind of monster—one derived from humanity itself—that threatens the entire galaxy.

Face the Raven (Episode 10) begins the three-part season finale, as Clara recovers a distress call from Rigby, the young street artist who helped saved the world from the Bonelass in Series 8's **Flatline** (2014).



Arriving with a concealed lotion on his neck that is counting down to zero, the Doctor determines that Rigby has been in recent contact with aliens. They track down a Trap Street, an alien sanctuary hidden on Earth, disguised over by Ms (Williams) of **Game of Thrones**, assuming the character of Ashildr/Ms. Rigby is accused of murdering one of the aliens, although he has no memory of doing it. He's been sentenced to death by Quennan Shade, a space that can souls and is controlled by Ms. Learning that the Quennan Lock tattoo can be transferred, and believing himself under Ms's protection, Clara begs them time to find the real killer. However, the entire scheme was a plot by Ms to entrap the Doctor for justice unknown. Having taken the Quennan Lock upon herself, Ms's contract with the Shade (which assumes the form of a raven) has been broken. With no way to escape her fate, and the Doctor dependent, Clara assumes all of her bravery and also demands that the Doctor honor her memory by not taking revenge. As the Doctor is about to be teleported to wherever Ms has betrayed him to, he warns her that the universe is a small place where he's angry with someone.

In **Brown Street** (Episode 11), the Doctor materializes inside a teleport chamber in a massive circle arranged like a circular maze. Pursued by the Vail, a shadowy creature he vaguely remembers from his past, the Doctor soon learns that it retreats whenever he tells it a secret about himself. As time passes, he figures out that the maze always eventually resets itself to its original configuration. Certain aspects of the maze seem familiar and eventually he discovers a way to escape—but it will take quite a long time. In the finale episode, **Hell Bent**, the Doctor escapes from his prison, only to learn he'd been trapped inside his own Confession Dial (first referenced in Episode 1, **The Magician's Apprentice**) for 4.5 billion years! Deposed upon his home world of Gallifrey in the distant future, the Doctor leads a bloodless Me's coup against Lord President Rassilon (first seen in the 10th Doctor special **The End of Time**) and the High Council of Time Lords, banishing them from Gallifrey. Rassilon and the High Council had feared the coming of the Hybrid, a creature foretold to eventually stand in the ruins of Gallifrey "to look its own heart." The General (Jan Blomart) and Chibs of Karn (Clare Higgins) believe the Doctor can prevent the coming of the Hybrid. The Doctor claims he must use an extraction chamber to pull Clara from her time stream just before death so he can console her. In doing so, her life processes are time-locked, as she is literally living between heartbeats. Once extracted, the Doctor betrays the General and escapes into the Chameleon with Clara. It had all been part of the Doctor's plan to save Clara from the death he still feels responsible for! But there are consequences for his actions, and when he steals another TARDIS and travels with Clara to the far end of the universe, he once again encounters Ashildr/Ms (Williams), sitting in the ruins of Gallifrey, waiting for everything to end. The Doctor controls that she is the Hybrid, a mix of the water and



of humanity and the Mire. Ms posits that the Doctor is the Hybrid, and reprogramed it from the prophetic, which was why he originally fled Gallifrey so very long ago. But she then advances the theory that the Hybrid isn't just one person but two: The Doctor and Clara together. Realizing that it no longer really matters, and that he has broken every rule and law he ever believed in, he knows the only way to save Clara is to wipe her memory using a neuro-block device. Unknown to either of them, Clara has watched the entire exchange from inside the TARDIS. She uses the Doctor's sonic sunglasses to reverse the polarity on the device and tells him she'd rather return to her death than have her memories taken. Unaware Clara has actually done anything to the neuro block, they activate it together. At a moment, the Doctor starts to collapse, as it is his memories of Clara that are being erased! Ms helps Clara warn the Doctor to Earth and reunite him with his original TARDIS. Posing as a waitress in a diner the disguised sister TARDIS, Clara makes sure the Doctor will be all right. Her life still time-locked but her death a fixed point in time, Clara decides she and Ashildr/Ms will return to Gallifrey so the Time Lords can smother her back into her time stream—well, perhaps, a few steps along the way.

The two-disc set includes four episodes of *Doctor Who* Extra behind-the-scenes features. The 2015 Christmas Special, **The Husbands of River Song**, was released on DVD and Blu Ray 2/16, while *Doctor Who: The Complete Series 9* was issued 4/16 and features multiple extras, including **The Doctor's Meditation**, a prequel to **The Magician's Apprentice**. Series 10 is being delayed by showrunner Steven Moffat because of his commitments to the series **Sherlock**, and 2016 will only see a Christmas Special. Regular episodes will resume in 2017, with 12 episodes and a Christmas Special. Moffat has announced he will depart *Doctor Who* at the end of Series 10 and it's expected that Capaldi will also vacate the title role at that time. **J**

RADHA MITCHELL FROM PITCH BLACK TO DARKNESS As Told To david j. moore

Australian actress Radha Mitchell has an impressive filmography that genre-movie fans will be familiar with. Her roles in *Pitch Black*, Richard Franklin's final film *Visions*, the two *Silent Hill* films, *The Crucible*, *Olympus Has Fallen* and as suspect *London Has Fallen* (to name a few) have shown that she's one of the strongest and most dependable performers to appear in films featuring monsters, killers, ghosts, or terrorists. Her latest films—*The Darkness*, from director Greg McLean, whom she worked with on the giant unsinkable movie *Rogue*, and the dark thriller *Sacrifice*—both show her versatility and range as an actress. In this interview, Radha discusses the challenges and rewards of working in genre cinema. —djm

david j. moore Over the years you've starred or costarred in a number of horror and sci-fi films. Is this a genre that you enjoy being in?

RADHA MITCHELL I guess it is. I'm not always watching those kinds of films, but I really enjoy the genre that you do for them because you know you're talking to people who are really in love with those films, and film buffs who love cinema. That is always a pretty huge. The stories themselves and the directors are always sort of cutting edge in their own progressive space in terms of what can be done in cinema. All that is fun. The additional elements are really interesting as an actor. You get to go to these really new places and take the gloves off. It's not so much about the dialogue as it is about the emotional state. There's kind of a freedom there.

djm You starred in *Visions*, which was Rich and Franklin's final movie. What do you remember about working on that film?

RM Oh, wow. Well, Richard was a cool, easygoing, right-on-the-edge-of-the-gene director from Australia. He was wonderful to work with. For some reason, he decided to shoot me on a boat in the middle of nowhere and had me talk to a cat? The challenge of all that was unusual and interesting. It was really a pleasure to work with him.

djm You got to work on *Pitch Black*, which has grown as a cult film over the years. Would you say something about working with Vin Diesel just at the point where he was about to become a big star?

RM It was a fascinating time to encounter some body's talent. He really had a vision and he ended up living that vision, so it was really interesting to see the beginning of that. *Pitch Black* was an interesting story shot by a great DP and I think it was quite experimental and still holds up as a good film now.

djm You can be very physical with your performances. I'm thinking of you in *Pitch Black*, but then there's the emotional severity and the rawness of scenes of your other performances. Your roles in *The Darkness* and *Sacrifice* really convey that.

RM Yeah. The emotional elements are what's evoking about a project. The pure adrenaline, the rush that you get with these kinds of roles. You don't find that in talk-driven characters. It's kind of like the rush you get—I'm learning how to surf for my next project. It's very physical and it has real impact.

djm Your new film *Sacrifice* is pretty futuristic. The opening scene where you have a miscarriage is pretty disturbing. Was that a difficult scene for you to act out?

RM [Difficult is probably not the right word, but it was interesting to me. It's as difficult as anything else, but it was kind of cathartic. She was trying to help somebody else, and she realizes that she's actually the one who needs the help. It's a pretty horrifying moment for a doctor. Particularly, in this case she's trying to get pregnant and get pregnant, and it's a real moment of tragedy, and that's how we introduce that character.

djm There are some really beautiful shooting locations in *Sacrifice*. Say something about some of the places you filmed for this project.

RM We were doubling the Shetland Islands with locations around Dublin. Actually, we certainly had a tour of that island of Ireland when we were shooting that movie and learned about Irish culture, which is funny because we're talking about Scottish culture in the movie. There's now, raw beauty and beautiful landscapes. There's a real romance there and also kind of a real darkness. That, I think, had a huge impact on how this story was told.

djm In some ways, *Sacrifice* is a good example of the state of women in horror today. It's very much in the vein of feminist reexamines and vice versa. Do you have any thoughts on that?

RM I think that's the state of the world right now! Women have struggled to get a voice, and when you hear a woman's voice in a horror film, usually it's screaming. So the guys have to go to the bad guys. I think that's going to shift when the guy starts screaming and so women have to save them, and then you can mix it all up and forget about gender at some point. Right now, though, it might be a little "us" against "them." But I actually think that movie adds to that dialogue as that



it extends the generation—the characters are a little bit older than characters that show up in this kind of genre. I think that will appeal to women of multiple generations. That's one of the reasons why I was interested in the piece.

djm *Sacrifice* is based on a novel. Did you get a chance to read the book?

RM No, I was sort of boxed in what I was doing. The script itself. I was leading with what was in front of me. Obviously, I knew there was a story behind the story. The writer [Sharon Bolton] wanted us on set, and she was very happy with what we were doing. I think she was just excited that it had been made into a film. It was nice to have her around. I was reliant on the director's interpretation of the piece.

djm Your performance in *Sacrifice* is incredibly physical. You run, you risk people, people risk at you, you're thrown around and beat up. It's intense.

RM I like that. But there's a certain elegance to the piece, too. She's a doctor. She has a mentality as a doctor. She finds herself in this extreme circumstance that she can't ignore. There's a mystery that she feels compelled to resolve. The deeper she gets into it, it turns every body that she turns into people that she can't trust. She has an innate sense of integrity that compels her further into this investigation. That leads her to discover some secrets or skills that she didn't know that she had. She even handles a Robot. Can you handle a Robot? I can after playing this role. She can run fast and stab people and all these things, but she couldn't have done those things at the beginning of the story. She evolved into a different character by the end.

**"When you hear a woman's voice in a horror film, usually it's screaming."
Radha Mitchell**

djm This movie has an innate sense of paranoia to it. After doing the film, did you go home a little paranoid or look at the world are differently?

RM The film directly addresses female paranoia in an extreme way, which was fun for me to play with. I think the writer did something to empower her. She turned it into a female story.

djm You were in another movie called *The Crazies* where you played a doctor faced with a town turning against her and her husband. There are similarities there.

RM We were both doctors, right? In *The Crazies*, I wanted to learn how to take blood pressure because I didn't actually understand what blood pressure was or what it was a measure of or how you take that measurement. So they sent me to a gynecologist. They didn't tell me that. So I was taken on these rounds in this gynecologist's office. I learned about menstrual diseases and things I didn't particularly want to know at that time. In a way, I was completely prepared for this film. The character I play in *Sacrifice* is a gynecologist. I'd already had the training, strangely enough. It's a bizarre story. There's an elegance in how both of these films are shot. Both had excellent DPs. I liked the

ally sheedy radha mitchell

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"two thumbs up!"

from *A Film*
(WENN.COM)

lighting of *The Crazies*. There's a symmetrical tension to the way that story was revealed. I think this movie has some of that as well. It's all about unraveling the plot, and the audience is guessing along with the character. *Sacrifice*, more than in *The Crazies*, the characters are more compelling because their emotional needs are more relatable.

djm It's rare these days to see female-driven thrillers or films of any kind, really, and you're great in the lead. I'd love to see more movies of this type with you.

RM The movie does something to open up the dialogue of who the audience is for these kinds of films. It's certainly for a broader female audience than you would traditionally associate with wanting to see stuff like this. It's going to appeal to multiple generations. The women are obviously very female. Having a real woman—she's not an action hero—take on this challenge is something that women will relate to and appreciate.

djm Your director on *The Darkness* is Greg McLean, who you worked with before on *Rogue*. Talk about working with him and the differences between the two experiences.

RM Well, in *Rogue*, he got me eaten by a crocodile. In this one, he stuck me in a house and the creatures are coming into the house. What's wonderful about working with Greg is that he's just such a lovely presence and such a natural leader and all of his sets are so much fun to be on. In this case, it felt like we were at a Halloween party. We really enjoyed messing ourselves out. There was a lot of screaming going on and there was a lot of laughing. I think he enjoys setting up a certain kind of volatility in the storytelling. A lot of his stuff deals with extreme situations and in this case the build is quite subtle.

djm Who do you think the audience is when it comes to films like *The Darkness*?

RM I think there's a broad audience for this film. The siting of the film certainly opens it up. Anybody can go. The effort of it is that there's a subtle, creepy feeling that creeps up on you over time. It appeals to anyone who likes the *Blumhouse* brand. Anyone who is looking for a little bit of a thrill. *Blumhouse* is the perfect umbrella for the project. There's an audience that really appreciates this genre. It's produced by the right company.

djm Do you have a few horror films you enjoy watching more than ours?

RM The [original] *The Vanishing*, *Cat People*, *Gremlins*. I want to watch *Gremlins* again. As a kid, that was a totally creepy film. I like it when they're a bit scary, when they have a scuffling edge to it.



djm Earlier this year, you reprised your role from *Olympus Has Fallen* in *London Has Fallen*. Was there a difference for you to play the same character again? Were there any differences for you between the two films?

RM In *London Has Fallen*, there was an extension of the characters, and you get to see a little bit more of them, personally. Hopefully, you're left with a little curiosity about which next country could be attacked and how the hell is he going to protect them?

djm What is it that you look for when projects come your way? What is the deciding factor for you?

RM I think if the story is innovative on some level. The talent you'll be working with. The next movie I'm going to do is a surfing movie. It's a female-oriented story, with a woman director, with a really sweet message. I like movies that have something positive to say and that have the talent behind it that they can execute that. I often find my self in movies that are quite unconvincing, like *The Darkness*. It doesn't necessarily have a super intense positive message, but it does have a spin behind it that is evocative, and it's a little wild. I like that.

djm If you were to take one thing with you from your experience while working on *The Darkness*, what would that be?

RM Don't let a rattlesnake in your kitchen! It's a slow, creepy build and if it leaves you with any residue of the movie—like *The Vanishing* left me years ago—then I think we will have accomplished what we set out to do. ☺

The Phantom's NOIR GANG!

KING LORRY FILMS
(529.95 DVD) 5/16

THE CHASE (1946) R (PG) 5/16

D Arthur D. Hodge, Robert Cummings, Peter Lane, Michelle Morgan, Steve Cochran, Lloyd Corrigan, Jack Holt 86 mins

Venerable offbeat scripter Philip (Johnny Gummer, *Bloody Women*)'s Gordon strikes again, adapting this terrific, bizarre noir from prolific mystery writer Cornell (Rear Window) Woodcock's novel *The Black Path of Fear*. Diner Chuck Scott (Cummings), late of Hitchcock's 1942 masterpiece *Saboteur* lines up as a chauffeur for big-time Florida gangster Eddie Roman (Cochran, at his shiftest) and dismissive but dangerous mistress Gao (Lane, adding to his impressive noir and proto-noir resume, crowded with undelivered roles as Joseph H. Lewis' *Stranger on the Third Floor* [1940], John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* and Robert Henry's *The Face Behind the Mask* [both 1941]), who form an unforgettable upscale loveable team (Longtime Jack Benny nemesis Don Wilson plays in a change-of-pace cameo as a shady businessman named Tids). About midway through, Chuck and Roman's unhappy wife Lorna (Gummer) French import Morgan's essence to Havana for an extended sexual tryst. Or do they? You'll want to hang on to find out in this sleek-of-its-time fever dream noir neatly restored (save for a few brief grainy patches) in Kino's Irish Blu-ray edition. Special features include an audio commentary by acclaimed Canadian filmmaker Ian Gray (*The Forbidden Room*) Madden, two audio adaptations of Woodcock's novel, featuring Brian Donkley and Cary Grant, and a selection of noir trailers.

OLIVE FILMS

(529.95 DVD) 5/16

TRY AND GET ME (1950) R (PG) 5/16

D Cyril Endfield, Frank Lovejoy, Kathleen Ryan, Richard Carlson, Lloyd Bridges, Katherine Locke, Adele Jergens, Art Smith 92 mins

A bizarre noir that wobbles midway to a somewhat precisely social indictment, *Try and Get Me* (aka *The Sound of Fury*) benefits mightily from scripter Jo Pague's skillful adaptation of his own novel and future *Zulu* steer Endfield's sure-handed, atmospheric direction. Bridges starts out as a slick, sociopathic small-time hood who hires unemployed family man and chronic cheap Lovejoy into helping him pull off an ill-advised kidnapping caper. Joe E. Ross, later of *Car 54* fame, comes as a menacing bogyman come in a wonderfully felicitous night-

club scene, while Locke provides pizazz as a craft and booze addled Lovejoy's hapless love-hyenas "date" and Jergens projects cheerfully vulgar pizzazz as Bridges' heavy blond spouse. Try's less-than-stellar picture of 1950s American cinema, particularly a blithely amoral, exploitative press represented by alternately comic reporter Carlson and mail newspaper publisher Smith, would have made it an ideal candidate to share a double bill with Billy Wilder's even more scode *Ace in the Hole* (VS #64) (now you can watch both at home for an evening of include but not necessarily still relevant scandal). *Olive Films'* sharp Blu-ray makes a major upgrade over the movie's earlier VHS release via Republic Pictures Home Video, the disc arrives sans extras but with optional English subtitles.

WARNER ARCHIVE

(521.99 DVD) 3/16

EDGE OF DOOM (1950) R (PG) 3/16

D Mark Robson, Dana Andrews, Farley Granger, Joan Evans, Robert Keith, Paul Stewart, Mala Powers, Adele Jergens, Harold Vermylen 97 mins

Few handsome young dopes could project inner torment better than Granger, who deployed that unique talent in several memorable films, including two Hitch classics, *Rope* and *Strangers on a Train*. Nicholas Ray's *They Live by Night* (VS #64, remade by Robert Altman as *Thirteen Like Us*), Anthony Mann's *Side Street* (VS #64), and the nearly Disneyesque melodrama. Adapted by the ubiquitous Philip Yordan from Leo Rudolph's novel, *Edge of Doom* showcases Granger as Martin Myers, a hard-working L.A. slum youth desperately trying to suit away enough dough to meet a his dying mother to Arizona's healthier climes. When that plan tragically falls through, Martin demands local pastor Father Karlsson (Vermylen) arrange a decent funeral for his devout sons, pretty to make means for the priest's ritual to bury Martin's father, a suicide, in consecrated ground years earlier. In a fit of pique, Myers crushes the everything cleric's skull with a handy crucifix, then sees another man arrested for the murder. Martin seeks desperately to cover up the killing and come to moral grips with his dilemma, even as understanding priest Father Roth (Andrews) investigates the crime on his own. Director Robson leans on unrelentingly grim shock-rock scenarios, which Myers meets in a dazed state of over-exhausting self-torture, while handsome cops attempt to put a movie-quester stacking on him, not realizing they're on the case of the prize-killer. (In the film's only relatively light, self-referential scene, the theater is playing a Farley Granger movie [it titled *Our Very Own*, costarring Edge's Joan Evans.) While not exactly the freud-gone film of 1950, or DVD of 2016 for that matter, *Edge of Doom* gets essential viewing for now buffs, most notably for Harry Stradling's dandy poetic cinematography and Stewart and the ever-reliable Jergens' supporting parts as Martin's low-life neighbor and his blond friend.

Nancy Naglin's VIDEO VERITE

WHERE TO INVADE NEXT (2015) R (PG) 5/16

D Michael Moore, Krista Kohn, Tim Wether 120 mins (Anchor Bay Entertainment) 5/16

Recognizing that other countries put the United States to shame, doing so much better in education, healthcare, incarceration, and women's reproductive health services, Moore takes the roadshow overseas to find out what countries we ought to "invade," the better to take home their secrets. First stop Italy, where he meets a cop and his wife, both of whom have eight weeks' paid vacation a year, an extra month's salary in December, a daily two-hour lunch eaten at home and, of course, five months paid maternity leave in France, the schoolchildren, even in the poorest districts, eat a four-course meal and are instructed in etiquette and nutrition. In Finland, the school day is short, children have no homework, are prepared for life and life's interests—and top nearly all countries in academic performance. In Portugal, the police don't arrest for drugs. In Norway, the maximum prison term is 21 years and the penal system is geared toward rehabilitation. Not surprisingly, Moore is agog—at times so we're, especially when he lands in Tunisia, a third world country with free women's healthcare. Antiposed with interviews with the Finnish Minister of Education and Scandinavian women CEOs who say they wouldn't live in the States if you put them in the sad footage of American life—prisoners, mostly black, being beaten, school police instructing kids, American college students placidly sitting on lawns while their Canadian and European counterparts, who already enjoy free or low tuition, strike against even modest tuition hikes. Moore, unquestionably American, with trademark attitude, cynicism, occasional boorish behavior and cony cynicism, is the perfect counterpart to all this just-unsavable nonsense. Why, for Americans, is this all pie in the sky? Obviously, military spending is killing us. But Moore does an insightful job of explaining why so much of what we want that don't have is tied to the role and legacy of race. Then there's greed. The workers over there are citizens and neighbors. Here, they're wage slaves, masses are the enemy. Welcome, even welcomed, Moore shows a softer, more without style. The tour could have been shortened slightly, but you'll want to take it. The saddest thing of all the inspiration for many of these successes originated in the United States. **B**

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Nancy Naglin's ART-HOUSE VIDEO

THE MAJOR (2013) 장마전우치

D Yany Bykov, Denzin Strechev, Yany Bykov, Inna Nizina, Ilya Isayev, Dmitry Kitchikov, Boris Novikov, Kirill Polukhin 99 mins (Olive Film) 4/6

Multi-talented director, writer and film editor Bykov also serves the music and acts in his highly suspenseful, unpredictable tale of grim delights. Director Bykov doesn't waste a second: suspicious cop Major Sergey Sobolev (Shtukov), channeling self-criticism and cynicism, opens the film driving recklessly to the hospital where his wife is giving birth and snoring down a child. Who hasn't had an accident, an event you can't reverse? But even for Russia, a country that is ethnically, historically, hopelessly corrupt, what happens next stuns the senses. And perhaps that's Bykov's not-so-subtle point. Well, of course, Sobolev's practical and harder-edged colleague Pavel Kreshnikov (Bykov, with commanding presence) talks a swearing Sobolev there'll be a cover-up. The hysterical mother Inna Gutereva (Nizina) is given bread to calm her nerves (and to prove her a drunk), and in short order the parents of the dead child are summoned to the police station where, suddenly, they're treated as suspects, especially when outraged Mr. Guterev (Kitchikov) is beaten to a pulp when his wife refuses to sign the doctor's accident report. Corruption in Bykov's world isn't a single event or a cascading chain of bad decisions, it's the revolution of and revolting in the swirl of casual malfeasance that makes those cops tick and makes their world—and the Guterevs' too—go round. That's the genius of this film: You get incredibly bad behavior presented in casual happenstance and, even more interestingly, you get what perpetual cover-up does to people. Everything comes home to roost when Mr. Guterev, relying on a very modern solution to his problem, shows up at the police station and, armed with a shotgun, takes two cops hostage. The decision on high is to kill these pesky Guterevs. Who has the guts to do it and who wants to blow the whistle? Bykov may have imaginatively captured the dilemma of all of Putin's Russia, but *The Major* is also an engrossing, enthralling *High Noon* between Sobolev and Kreshnikov with an endless bag of morally challenging twists, turns and tricks.

MUSTANG (2015) 장미여관

D Deniz Gamze Ergüven, Özge Smey, Dogu Zeynep Doganül, Tugba Sungurboz, Elit Iscan, Baysal Akdogan, Nihal G. Koldan, Aybekt Pektem, Burak Yigit 97 mins (Cohen Media) 5/6

In a culture that venerates female virginity as both religious and societal backbone, women—their private parts and the pairing of femininity—become fetish, which is where this updated *Pride and Prejudice* and *Little Women* Turkey-set tale turns disarming frank. Five sisters, modern and free, with cell phones and Western wardrobe, leave school one day, end up frolicking in the ocean with boy schoolmates, and are thereafter, for their own good and the sake of their virginity, locked in their uncle's home where their grandmother (Koldan) and a succession of old old biddies instruct them in the boring housemaking arts. Those girls are not so intent to break bread all day long and so, led by Lale (Smey), the impossible youngest, plot and succeed at ever more daring escapes with escalating consequences. The solution, of course, is to marry them off. Sexy oldest Sonay (Akdogan) refuses a suitor and goes to marry for love, her less lucky and showy sister Selma (Sungurboz) is snook with her rapist. The issues are close, and it's pleasurable to spend time with them as they monitor one another's comings and goings, question one another about sex, make up games, and flop in bed.

The Wedlock way. The mood is delightfully diffused. '70s French art-house, a laudatory pace, the scenes conveying details, a pointedly cool for the landscape, home and garden. As with the sex talk, which holds surprises, beneath the orderly pattern of life in a perfectly present, air-segregated rustic town, run turbulent currents. There's lust, too, so subtle it can be missed, that post-familial Uncle Fink (Pektem) is sexually abusing niece Eve (Iskan). Fethi requires secrecy and ingenuity, so the marriage customs, new to both as and Lale, are fascinating and, as the girls rebel, increasingly offensive. With as many charms, the film is straightforward, in fact, cringe making, with its depiction of virginity tests. Hypocrisy can only go so far and, while some sisters fare better than others, you'll want to stay with the girls to see who makes it to the end.

THE SEVENTH SIN (1957) 七人の罪人

D Ronald Neame, Vincente Minnelli (uncredited) Eleanor Parker, Bill Travers, George Sanders, Jean-Pierre Aumont, Francisco Bony, Ellen Corby 94 mins (Warner Archive) 4/6

A connoisseur of the cinema locale, W. Somerset Maugham plucked his 1925 morality adultery novel *The Painted Veil* in Hong Kong, updated in the 1957 release to 1949. The new gap made little difference then, but today the expectations and motivations of the troubled couple, Dr. Walter Curwin (Travers) and his unfaithful, independent wife Cora (Parker), reflect different social values. The ubiquitous Parker plays a hard-edged realist who thought she'd married well but now finds herself marooned in China, craving love. What hasn't changed much is the intervening

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decades is the other man, Paul Duvalle (Aumont), who, when faced with Dr. Curwin's ultimatum—he'll agree to divorce if Duvalle does the same and the lucky couple assumes within the following week—is suddenly revealed as a repeat philanderer. Minnelli was called in to improve the already-fringed opening scenes of the lovers fleeing detection and stayed to lead a hand here and there. The score is by Miklos Rozsa (*The Four Brothers*, *The Thief of Baghdad*, *Spellbound*, *Ben-Hur*), the other top talent who not only spices the narrative but makes the movie as the devil, unappealing, always as enjoyable as it is. The accomplished George Sanders, here playing the gossipy, career-shedding China hand, Tim Waddington, Cora meets him once she trespasses unwittingly after her husband, who's been called to a remote island to treat a cholera epidemic. Waddington causes the Curwins' marital disaster immediately, and the delightfully campy Sanders, a stand-in for one of Maugham's closeted characters, shares up Cora with gay venom and double entendres. Waddington introduces Cora to do-gooder mom, Mother Superior (Corby), who in period films is a decoy for today's social worker, and sweet Sister Saint Joseph (Corby, later psycho Victor Stone's nagging mother, sort of a breathing Mrs. Bates, in *The Strangler* [VS 1980]), through whom Cora finds redemption. The film has the requisite interview Maugham ending, but again it's Sanders who has the last word as a break with prevailing convention, Waddington, causing the refinement of gay style and the salience of gay masculinity—like Maugham's frank acknowledgment of his many affairs—is married to a Chinese woman, a substitute for another kind of transgressive relationship. **B**

BEST OF THE FESTS:
SCREAM QUEEN FILMFEST,
NAGOYA TOUR STOP
 By Joseph Perry

SCREAM QUEEN FILMFEST TOKYO (SQFTT), launched in 2013, is dedicated to showcasing and promoting feature-length and short-film genre works by female filmmakers from around the world. SQFTT holds its annual main festival in Tokyo in October, with smaller tour stops in Osaka in August and Nagoya in February. Each program differs from one event to another, with some shared programming at each event. I was fortunate enough to attend the Nagoya festival this year and was thoroughly impressed by the quality of programming.

SQFTT's Nagoya venue is Theater Cafe, and to call the space intimate is an understatement—there are only 18 seats in the screening room! (The main Tokyo festival is held in a larger venue.) Each of the weekend screenings I attended was filled to capacity. Theater Cafe hosted the event for a total of seven days.

The Nagoya tour stop focused on 17 short films shown in three blocks. Kicking off Block A, director Izy Lee's *A Frown* is a horror offering with some wicked humor to it. Jackson (Shana Callaghan) is just about to dig into some Nachos and grab a football game on TV when he picks a phone call. Agreeing to do a friend a favor, he soon learns that the task is a truly gruesome one. Our darkly comic scene sets great Foley whistles to create a sequence that made me cringe and laugh at the same time. Lots of gore effects will find some well-done work on display. Callaghan gives a nice comical turn as the lead role, and Lee does a fine job balancing different styles of humor with the horror.

The Australian thriller *Pink* focuses on a man named Leon (Brendan Donoghue) who is clearly haunted by something—but is it a phantom or a fantasy? Writer-director Lyneane Vincent McCarthy leaves that up to the viewer's imagination. Leon seems uneasy upon waking and is later hit with a ball by kids playing cricket. A young girl (Olivia Fitzgerald) is a pink, puffy dress cousin. Leon and follows him from their aging neighborhood into a surrounding wooded acreage area. Something terrible happens there; it may be a figment of Leon's imagination, or a realising event. Donoghue gives an intense performance as the troubled Leon, while Fitzgerald makes a solid entrance debut as the child who won't leave him alone despite his requests that she do so. Going much deeper into *Pink* would risk venturing into spoiler territory, so I'll simply recom-



Lullaby and Good Fright: Patricia Chica's short *Serpent's Lullaby* soothes with old-school scares.

mend it as a beautifully shot, thought-provoking short left open to different interpretations.

The first-rate gothic thriller *Little Lamb* is another effort from Dawn Under. Water-dissolver editor Heidi Lee Douglas sets her period piece in 1829 colonial Tasmania. Lottisa (Georgia Lucy) has been sent to a women's prison there by the British government. Conditions are harsh, and the dreams of a way out. Her only option may be to become a servant to a local. When a man named Mr. Black (James Grant) returns to the prison to select a new servant, Lottisa, utterly volunteered, despite the suspicions of her very colleague Agnes (Jade Karing). Lottisa soon learns the truth as Agnes' remarks about life outside the prison walls being more dangerous than inside. Mr. Black begins to display unusual behavior, granting behind Lottisa as she hikes toward and peeping through the window when she bathes. Accompanied by a lamb, she takes a liking to, Lottisa explores a barn that Mr. Black has warned her not to enter. She makes some bloody discoveries there and suddenly hears her footsteps approaching. *Little Lamb* builds its mystery to an exciting climax. Douglas' re-creation of the period looks great, while her screenplay and direction deliver solid suspense, and Lucy and Grant give superb performances.

Canadian writer-director Kirsten Canbaw's *Fish Out of Water* kicked off Block B. This suspense/science-fiction horror effort, set in a snowy Antarctic wasteland, is short on exposition but entertaining and challenging. A lone woman (Mia Hall) with scars on her face searches for food, but what she finds makes it clear that something is not right with the balance of nature. A title girl (Jill Bertelsen) crosses her path and the horror aspect of the story soon accelerates. Canbaw shot the film in -40 degree winter in the Canadian Arctic with nonprofessional actors. Her own's efforts pay off well as the bleak landscape is virtually a third character in the film.

Writer-director Natalie James' *Trick*, an Australian film spoken in Mandarin and set in Shang-

hai, concerns Mei (Jennifer Chang), a wealthy housewife who is being haunted by a past decision she and her husband made. Mei sees a ghost in her home and confides in her mother, who feels that ghosts always appear for a reason. Unable to reach her son, who has recently been accepted to university, and emotionally distressed from her husband, Mei ponders the couple's earlier decision and tries to make sense of her ghostly visitor. James has crafted a fetching, macabre film focused more on Mei's wavering state of mind than on shocks and scares.

Patricia Chica's *Serpent's Lullaby* is a magical magic tale gorgeous to behold. Fans of old-school horror such as Universal's monster classics, Hammer's lush fright fare, or sleek '60s and '70s Hammer movies need to suck out this short film. I won't give away who the main character is because it represents a major spoiler, but I will say that Jeremy Walker is superb as the post-Flac character suffers a loss at the outset when her baby dies, a trauma it seems she has gone through before. When we see her approach a young mother and her baby in the park, we wonder if this might be part of a ghostly, ongoing cycle. Chica weaves together a beautifully realized, expertly learned magical world with gothic overtones, and the score fits perfectly.

The phenomenal short *Shot* is an absolute masterpiece I can't recommend highly enough. Set in rural America in the 1970s, this film from writer-director Chloe Okuno follows social outcast Maddy (Molly McInyre) and her transformation from laughingstock of the local roller rink to wannabe bombshell. Along the way, a stranger, played by James Gaillo, wanders into town and soon proves to have a dangerously dark side to his initial charm, as the flirtatious John (Kane Plowright) will unfortunately find out. This psycho-slasher has some wickedly sexy lines throughout and delivers big-time in the suspense department. The performances by McInyre and Gaillo are remarkable, while the set design and costuming are exceptional. *Shot* is a fun roller-coaster ride of horror thrills.

SHORT TAKES

THE SPIRIT CABINET COLLECTION: THE NARRATIVE OF VICTOR KARLOCH (2012) 95 minutes

D: Kevin McTack. Voice cast: Christopher Lloyd, Elijah Wood, Maureen O'Farrell. 15 min.

THE MILL AT CALDER'S END (2015)

95 minutes
D: Kevin McTack. Voice cast: Jason Florey, Barbara Steele, Peter Michael. 14 min.

Two of the most intriguing, mesmerizing, and atmospheric recent horror shorts are director McTack's *The Narrative of Victor Karloch* and *The Mill at Calder's End*. These unique offerings use puppetry and in-camera effects to tell two tales of the supernatural that display a rarefied sense of good old-fashioned wonder. These shorts, the first installments in McTack's *The Spirit Cabinet* series, should truly delight viewers interested in classic storytelling, vintage ghost tales, and practical effects. For more than two decades, McTack has worked in the industry as a creature effects artist (*Nightlight*), special FX makeup artist (*Blade II*), cinematographer (*Blackpool*), model maker (*Shutter Island*) and puppeteer (*Kong Kong*) in Hollywood and for New Zealand's WETA Workshop.

In *The Narrative of Victor Karloch*, the eponymous character (voiced by Lloyd) is a scholar of the unknown who has gathered together a group of sympathetic colleagues to share with them a truly astonishing tale. An apprentice cartographer for the Royal Naval Academy named William Merryweather (Wood) has contacted Karloch to tell him about his trip aboard the cargo freighter *Cannopus* in a stretch of ocean known as The Witch's Children, 800 nautical miles off South-east India, where hundreds of vessels have previously gone missing. Merryweather tells out the experiences Mark I. diving sphere with its designer, Professor Greger Marley (O'Farrell). Merryweather makes the maiden dive solo, but the craft is destroyed by a large sea creature. He awakens in a maritime graveyard that he describes as "No place for mortal men, this was a city of the dead." He has some chilling experiences in this aquatic otherworld, including the discovery of a spine inscribed "We await the once and future king," which he believes holds the key to "an impossible evil [that could be] unleashed on all mankind." The art design for Karloch is truly amazing. Eerie imagery and parts of skeletons from both humans and marine animals tell Karloch's story. Details of rot and decay are shown on the stonework crafts. The puppets are amazingly realistic and a joy to watch. Karloch hints at being only the beginning of a much larger story and I would love to see the character of Victor Karloch and his mysterious world explored further.

As evocative and ethereal as Karloch is, *The Mill at Calder's End* represents an even greater achievement. This eerie short drops with dread



from the beginning and never lets up, taking viewers down paths they won't expect. Calder's End is a village one must traverse fog-shrouded moorlands, creepy wooded areas, and rocky roads to reach Nicholas Ginzhouse (Florey). He learned that his father has recently disappeared. Nicholas returns to his family home to handle the affairs of the estate. Among his inheritance is a peculiar box, holding "an ancient parchment, a contract of dark obligations, scribbled in some arcane script which had bored our ancestors to Calder's End for generations and had finally driven them all to madness." Nicholas decides to put an end to this cycle of insanity and embarks on a journey below the timber mill, a trip that winds up being not far removed from a visit to Hell itself. Like Karloch, *The Mill at Calder's End* boasts stunning attention to detail and breathtaking set design. The emotional faces of the puppet convey so much without their mouths ever moving—the eyes and expressions draw viewers into the atmosphere, and the voice actors complement the puppets superbly. Fans of Hammer Films' classic horror tales and vintage Dances-with-Wolves movies will find much to love in this supernatural thriller from its richly moored feel to the voice work by the legendary Steele.

The entire production crew deserves praise for bringing these wondrous short films to cinematic life. They are truly laborers of love in the best sense of that term and embody what movie magic is all about. Both films have won awards on the film festival circuit. Repeat viewings are pretty much guaranteed. *The Narrative of Victor Karloch* and *The Mill at Calder's End* are offered together on *The Spirit Cabinet Collection*. Hurray, available directly from thespiritcabinet.com. Bonus features include commentary for *The Mill at Calder's End* by McTack and VFX Supervisor Adam Siger, a VFX breakdown featurette, and a slideshow of concept art and behind-the-scenes images for Calder's End. ☞

—Joseph Perry

Black C offered the Australian horror comedy *Griffie*, which sees vampire Milla (Melanie Lynskey) posing dating sites for victims. She has a problem, though—one of her fangs is coming loose. Can she find a way to fix her fang and find true love on the Internet? Director Lucy Goldthorpe directs a screenplay by Claire D'Este. This black-and-white short has an appealing look and playful vibe, and Alice Hunter's vibrant score fits in well.

The Last Bastard has a Canadian historical focus, but viewers don't need to be familiar with the era to enjoy this dark drama. Writer-director Ashley Foster's short is set in 1679 on the Canadian Prairies and involves a five-year-old girl's first day at a house divorce center. Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds (Tom Edwards and Janice Ryan), who run the center, have a predicament with crows covetously flying into their windows and dying, but that is the least of the couple's problems, as the two harbor some disturbing secrets. Foster's highly colored worlds provide a rarefied contrast to her screenplay's sordid subject matter. Edwards and Ryan give fantastic performances as the Reynolds, with Edwards supplying a thoroughly chilling turn as a man who films the children through his living room window. Young Bryan Huter, as the Reynolds' new charge, shows some wonderful facial expressions in a wordless performance.

The science-fiction/horror short *Substance* is a terrific tale about two female friends who go to a winter science festival of, unknowingly, an alien organism in hand. Julia (Canadiana Jones Mound) is a scientist who sends up a weather balloon that returns to Earth with a mysterious goopy substance on it. She bottles it for research, but her daughter Mallory (Stephanie Larve Underwood) mistakes it for her Melatonin and takes it on the road trip with her friend Summer (Nagata Townsend). Mallory doesn't answer her mother's phone calls and when Summer meets a guy named Parker (Andy Eide), Mallory has him spike drink with the supposed sleep aid. Only Summer winds up drinking the stuff, which causes her to undergo deadly changes. Deftly directed by Barbara Szupowsky from her own tale screenplay and bolstered by skillful performances from the entire cast, along with beautiful cinematography, crisp editing, and a high-energy score, *Substance* is a blast for fans of monster mayhem.

Screen Queens Filmfest Tokyo Festival Director Miu Nakashita did an outstanding job selecting an excellent assortment of short films for the fest's Nagoya Year Step this year. I'm eager to see what she has in store as the ever-growing festival begins its fourth year this coming October. ☞

SPLIT SCREEN

Axes and Picks with **V&C**ris
Tim Ferrante & Scott Voisin

A lot of a *Split Screen* twist for this mid-year column featuring a special challenge match between our seasoned vets. Our genre pick is war movies and each has chosen a love film the other has never seen! Tim introduces Scott to Sam Fuller's World War II action classic *The Big Red One*—*The Reconstruction* (1980/2004) whilst Scott acquaints Tim with Ted Koscheff's powerful *Uncommon Valor* (1983). Remember, not their *last* ever seen the title chosen for the other. So let the opening battle begin! Or—does we suggest—might a truce be declared?

Tim Ferrante: Scott, we've hit upon an intriguing dynamic, introducing each other to movies the other has somehow missed. For me you selected *Uncommon Valor*, a picture of which I'd little knowledge. I read you after seeing the first 13 minutes saying my eyes were already tearing. Its premise was barely evolving, yet I was so moved by it that I'd already concluded *Valor* will be something most grand. Korean vet Colonel Jason Rhodes (Gene Hackman) receives word that his son is missing in action in Vietnam. The circumstances of his disappearance are scant and—after a decade of seeking help and accounting intel—the hazy Rhodes designs a complex plan to find his son. Its theme of a parent's unconditional love for a child to the point of risking one's life permeates every frame. And it's all thanks to Hackman's piercing portrayal of Rhodes' years of silent suffering and corroded bitterness. While a thoroughly improbable tale, it's as emotionally charged one nonetheless.

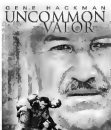
Scott Voisin: I never thought I'd say this, Tim, but you're 100% correct! Admittedly, it was unlikely *Valor* would ever bring home Oscar gold, but it's a damn good film that has flown under the radar for far too long. Rescuing Vietnam POWs may seem like a hackneyed '80s plot, but it's their worth noting that director Koscheff and producer John Milius expertly recreated the idea before Chuck Norris (*Missing in Action*) and Sylvester Stallone (*Rambo: First Blood Part II*) borrowed the concept for their respective live-action cartoons. As for your pick, *The Big Red One* is a movie I knew by reputation only, an off-cadre example of a studio taking a film away from the director and recasting it. Having never seen the theatrical version, I tried to guess what footage was kept and what was reworked, but after the first 30 minutes, I gave up. The movie is so abundantly off the wall from first frame to last, it's amazing Warner Bros. released it at all. It is, without a doubt, the most unconventional war film I've ever seen.



TF: Oh yes, *One* is noticeably unconventional. Is this your first exposure to Sam Fuller? If so, then take a look at a slew of his other works before the grim reaper swings his scythe your way. Trust yourself to *Shock Corridor* (1963), *Pickup on South Street* (1953) and *Whirligig* (1982). Diverse subjects all and ones that showcase his unique storytelling style. *One* is a very personal film, seeking more to express—for better or worse—the qualities of his characters. Their rooftop battles and encounters are excruciating and hopeful. So when you say that *One* is “so absurdly off-the-wall from first frame to last,” do you mean it's unrealistic or simply uncharacteristic of standard Hollywood treatment? *Valor* is, of course, a fictional account of a rescue attempt by the father of an MIA soldier. There are no walls or ceilings in regard to how that story can be told. But much like Fuller's *One* where he intensely conveys the humanity of a war, so does *Valor*. And that, my friend, is why both are above the norm.

SV: This was my first Fuller film, and it was eye-opening! Hollywood has provided my only experience with war, and as such, I'm familiar with the standard themes. The big mission, the personal transformation, the moral codes, etc. *One* eschews them all in favor of an episodic approach with no clear story arc. A film like *Valor* merges nearly from points A to B to C with skill and precision. Fuller chose to go from A to G to Q with no smooth transitions or end goal seemingly in mind. However, as the film played on, I began to understand that was exactly what he wanted to portray. For most soldiers, combat was a day-to-day experience, with no guarantee you were going to see the sun rise or set. Fuller actually uses the necessity of survival into a running gag, as the four main guys don't even bother to learn the names of their ever-changing squad members because the members are more than likely to die quickly. It's a subtle point of view, but one that was probably borne from actual experience.

TF: Yes, Koscheff's *Valor* is a polar opposite, exploring a fairly confined screenplay with dra-



matic flair. It has a captivating premise, a heart-honored theme and wraps it around a flawless cast. Both movies are sublime examples of the medium, but it's *One*'s lack of formalism dependent on a particularly enjoy. I must draw attention to Dino DiNoia's musical score—written when he was only 25 years old—and he utterly magnifies 60-second man life one. It leads with a bold melodramatic brass call of his men theme, then quickly collapses into a foreboding charge that's momentarily rectified by a score drum march seeking order and posture. He then releases expressions of dissonant strings, hopeful and struggling to advance against an intruding off-kilter brass treatment of the main theme. It releases war's sorrow, apology, selfish might and the prospect of unknown turmoil. It is the movie's emotional core in musical form and one of the most passionate and profound pieces I've ever heard. As for Fuller's atypical story structure, imagine it being told as his 113-minute theatrical cut rather than *The Reconstruction*'s 162 minutes!

SV: *One* is such an interesting movie, comparing the two versions would be a worthy investment of time. One area where both flicks excel that we haven't talked enough about is their choice of leading men. Hackman is—well, he's Hackman! The man can simply do no wrong. Although the quality of his films varies, the one thing you can be sure of is that he always delivers a terrific performance. As you briefly mentioned in your opening, his turn in *Valor* is exceptional, but Lee Marvin's portrayal of the Sergeant in *One* is equally impressive. Having built his career upon a “tough guy” persona, Marvin was given a rare opportunity to display a softer side, and he made the most of it. As a grizzled soldier worn down by the constant death surrounding him, he says more with weary eyes than any amount of dialogue could begin to describe. If a military unit is only as good as its leader, then film fans should feel comfortable reflecting with both *Uncommon Valor* and *The Big Red One* '83.

Have an idea for this column? Send your *Split Screen* suggestion to: phanmedia@aol.com

REELING BACK A FAREWELL TO 'NAM

By Nancy Naglin

WHO'LL STOP THE RAIN? (1978)

감독/12

D. Karel Kozac, Nick Nolte, Tuesday Weld, Michael Moriarty, Anthony Zerbe, Richard Murrin, Roy Shadley, Gail Strickland, Charles Hall 126 mins (MGM Home Entertainment)

Every war gives up its cinematic truth—steel helmets, pork chop hats, currently American majors and Loose Saravien (2014), Mark Wahlberg portraying real-life Navy SEAL Michael Luttrell abandoned in Afghanistan, operating on his own leg. But, taking nothing away from the ever-sobering *Paths of Glory* (1957), *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946) or Robert Aldrich's brutally aching *Attack* (1956), the Vietnam era is unmistakable for its brand of despair and disillusionment, portraying the futility of all our post-Vietnam soldiering. 1978 was *The Year of Vietnam Coming Home, The Deer Hunter, Rolling Thunder, The Boys in Company C, Go Tell the Spartans*, all discussing different aspects of the nightmare before the jingoistic, pump-iron Reveries, from Sly Stallone's nationalistic *Rambo* (First Blood Part II and III) to Chuck Norris' *Braddock* (Shining in Action series) and myriad tentacles, of the following decade. *Who'll Stop the Rain?*, co-scripted by Robert Stone from his novel *Dog Soldiers* and remade for one of the Criterion Clearwater Reversal songs that define the scene, is unique in discussing the psyche of the country and the time, illuminating the mindset of alienated youth with war as a constant backdrop and the nascent anti-establishment, hitherto unadmittable, that pervasive government corruption is a fact of life.

Moriarty turns in an outstanding performance as John Converse, a burned-out war correspondent, sick to death of the war horrors he's seen and exasperatedly setting the tone as the film's opening (they're so part of the ambient mood they're never repeated), eager to return home, but not before contacting good old buddy, Merchant Marine soldier Roy Hicks (Nolte) on top-notch form), to struggle a load of heroin to Los Angeles. The first question one asks is why does a war correspondent want to struggle drugs? Today, Hicks would return home to be an MSNBC (okay, maybe VICE) correspondent or, like SEALs-turned-entrepreneurs, look to make a fortune off their band battlefield observations. Reeling back, 1978 is a different cultural, political and media landscape. In the midst of such a cockamamie plot, it takes a moment to find

one's bearings, let the four invade the scenes, and remember to the sad and tragic misadventure—sexual, political, spiritual—a drug boy gone bad but nonetheless Hicks is a street-wise, go-along, put-along, survive-at-any-cost kind of guy. Converse is bookish, a womanizer player who looks Hicks' insane moves, who knows he's in over his head but wants to jump over the ledge anyway. Their differences animate tensions and coverage around Hicks' off-the-cuff, sexually liberated but post-feminist, pill-popping wife Marge (Weld) who, once Converse invades her life, follows him like a lost dog.

The heroin, of course, slips through everyone's fingers. The journey to find it, a literary and soaring modern-day search for the Holy Grail, begins when Converse comes home to find Marge gone and the house wrecked. He's greeted by Stone's enduring comic contribution: two bogus "undercover agents" (Murrin, Shadley) notable for their offbeat, wacky style and humor, an innovation back in the day but a staple today. The "oops" kidnapping Converse, first backing Chasch and Cheong-style, then ridiculing Converse's spec script Hicks, meanwhile, looks up with the heroin in an elaborate mountainside hippie retreat where he starts an nature and plants his soul. The hippie badman is outfitted with then-revolutionary light show paraphernalia, inspired by the failed light show developed for Ken Kesey (with whom Robert Stone was known to share a joint), which figures prominently in the terrific, war-combo-like, Vietnam-style shoot out of a finale.

Speculatively, *Rain* may have influenced *True Romance* (VS 448), for crooked DEA agent Eddie Prince (Hall) chasing Hicks and Converse as a conlude to the film industry's drug-buying clients. Hicks is a military type, who nonetheless lives by his own code and, in a very tragic, awkward but outsider subtle way, still pathetically and magnificently shown up by the cynicism of his military superior, due for it. But what of Converse, the mad, a stand-in, possibly, for the whole country, and the mainstream of the mainstream? I found myself impatient with him and judging him in well. Why drugs? Then I remember it was the currency of rebellion. Converse learns too late he was unskilled to be just the mule; he was set up with the tip for the drug buy in Vietnam. Hicks is lying dead on railroad tracks and Converse, with Marge at his side, just wants to escape the corpse. Rambling in playback, what with all of Stone's characters fighting the big war and their private war and pretty well outwitted from the fight—as well as being perpetually out of the mainstream, for the mainstream wouldn't acknowledge them, and, most importantly, never being able to end the war—it was as if all the aggression of the era turned inward like suicide. Then again, maybe nearly 40 years later I'm really getting Stone's vision. But's how Vietnam really the heart out of the country, Hicks, Converse and Marge, the original *Three Kings* (VS



#3), befuddled about how to find meaning or survive when you reap the whirlwind.

The sleeper of 1978's Vietnam movie crop is Ted Post's *Go Tell the Spartans* (BBFC), set early in the war, in 1964, way before *Killing* and *Camelot*, when Americans were only advisors, based on visionary Daniel Ford's 1967 novel *Incident at Muc Wa*. Major Ann Barker (Barth Lammont) is the "old man" and weary vet, having served in both World War II and Korea, who endures military bureaucracy as well as stupidity leading a band of fresh-faced rookies, dropouts, and burnt-out cases to their ridiculous slaughter in defense of a modest outpost. The title, of course, references the sacrifices of the 300 ancient Spartans defending Thermopylae from invading Persians. No such honor here: There's Cowboy (Dwain Kim), a Viet translator who shocks Lammont's boys by hellicoming a gook, corrupt, spineless South Vietnam officers, anti-protecting villagers who are Viet Cong, troops committing suicide—in short, everything that made Vietnam blood, betrayal and anguish. Ford, a Vietnam correspondent for *The Nation*, knew what he was writing about and presciently predicted the future: anticipating Robert Stone's memorial line, uttered by Moriarty's John Converse, from *Rain*. "In a world where elephants are pursued by flying men, people are just naturally going to want to get high." ☞

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The Phantom's JOY OF SETS

FILM FINDS

In the Asian arena, Arrow Video furnishes a wealth of excellent titles, leading with the six-film **Outlaw Gangster VIP** series (8-disc Blu-ray \$79.99), starring Tatsuya Watanabe as a leather-jacket-clad 1930s man who employs his lethal short sword to slice and dice predatory Yakuza criminals. The relentlessly compelling subtextures—**Outlaw Gangster VIP**, **Outlaw Gangster VIP 2**, **Heartless**, **Guro the Assassin**, **Black Dagger** (all 1968) and **Kill! (1969)**—are ripe for compulsive binge-viewing and, while audiences frequently repeat over the course of the series, the films supply plenty of gritty urban atmosphere, while Watanabe emerges as a charismatic antihero, part thug, part velvet, part romantic rebel, and all cinema cool. Titles include film expert Jasper Sharp's commentary on **Outlaw Gangster VIP: Kevu**.
Gibson's video essay providing an overview of the entire six-film series, abundant trailers and image galleries, plus an in-depth booklet

Arrow journeys farther back in time, to the late '50s, for its **Nikkatsu Diamond Gangs Trilogy Vol. 1** (3-disc Blu-ray \$32.99), collecting **Seijun (Breasted to Kill)** Suzuki's mystery **Yakuza Yokata a Shadow** (1948), **Boichi Sakai's Yakuza** caper **The Rambling Gullbird** (1956), and the true jewel of the trio, Toshio Mitozaki's **Red Pier** (1958), at once an evocatively filmed noir and atmospheric black-and-white immersion into the exotic portcity of Kobe, Japan. The label follows with **Nikkatsu Diamond Gangs Trilogy Vol. 2** (3-disc Blu-ray \$49.99), assembling **Takaya Mitsuyo's** (1946), **Danger Pays** (1946), and **Murder Unincorporated** (1949). Both sets come equipped with a myriad of extras, ranging from audio commentaries to interviews.

Arrow likewise launches its ambitious **American Horror Project** line. The 6-disc **Valmore I** Blu-ray (\$79.99) offers restored editions of three underseen-of-theatrical titles. **The Premontion** (see review page 47) arrives with a commentary by director Robert Allen Schickel, interviews with composer Henry Hathaway and actor Richard Lynch, along with a trio of Schickel short films. For the red-rumy **Malatesta's Carnival of Blood** (1971), Arrow complements the canonical-set reader dossier with cast and filmmaker interviews, a draft script and more. The label also brings back the moody **The Witch Who Came from the Sea** (1974), formerly out on the distant Subversive Cinema label, with a new commentary by star Milke Perkins, director Matt Cimber and cinematographer

Dana Condey, plus interviews with Condey and actor John Goff.

In the art-house arena, Scans Films Home Video celebrates the work of an influential Belgian indie auteur with **Chantal Akerman: Four Films** (4-disc \$49.98), assembling a quartet of subjective documentaries from far-flung locales. **From the East** (1963) charts a journey from Eastern Europe to Moscow; **South** (1969) investigates a racially motivated murder in Israel; **Texas, From the Other Side** (2002) examines the perils Mexican immigrants face in the deserts of Arizona; and the canon-plus-a **Down There** (2006) finds the filmmaker in Tel Aviv in a bid to reconnect with her Jewish roots. Titles feature include **Chantal Akerman, From Here**—an hour-long conversation with the filmmaker hosted by Gustavo Beck and Leonard Lutz Ferreira—plus a 16-page booklet with new essays by critics Jonathan Rosenbaum and Amy Taubin. Scans separately offers Marianne Loubser's **I Don't Belong Anywhere: The Cinema of Chantal Akerman** (\$24.98), focusing on some of her subject's 40 films.

Cohen Media remains active on the support front, with a special spotlight on French auteur Maurice Pialat. The three-film Blu-ray collection **The Films of Maurice Pialat** (3-disc \$49.98) gathers 1974's **The Mouth Agape**, the 1978 coming-of-age drama **Graduate First**, Isabelle Huppert and Gerard Philipeau in the romance **Lesluis** (1982), and the bonus documentary **Maurice Pialat: Love Exits**. Extras include cast and crew interviews, behind-the-scenes footage, deleted scenes, and trailers. From Italy, the same label introduces Federico Fellini's 1980 allegory **City of Women** (\$39.98 Blu-ray), starring Marcello Mastroianni and complemented by a feature-length making-of documentary, interviews with production designer Dante Ferretti and filmmaker Tinto Brass, and trailers.

Criterion Collection keeps busy with a brace of classic classics (\$39.99 each). **Rene Laloux's** animated sci-fi classic **Fantastic Planet** (1973) arrives in a new Blu-ray Special Edition. In addition to a fresh 2D digital restoration, the release includes an alternate English-language soundtrack, two early short films by Laloux and illustrator Roland Topor, a 2009 documentary on Laloux, an archival Topor interview and a 1974 French TV episode about his work, and an essay by critic Michael Brooke. The label likewise presents Nicholas Ray's deep Hollywood-set mess **On a Lonely Place** (1950), starring Humphrey Bogart as a mood-swinging screenwriter with violent tendencies, the great Gloria Grahame as his seductive but troubled neighbor, and Frank Lovejoy as an ex-GI pal-turned-cop.



Special features include a new audio commentary by film scholar Dana Polan, a condensed version of the Ray documentary profile **I'm a Stranger Here Myself**, an interview with Gloria Grahame biographer Vincent Canio, a 1988 radio adaptation, an essay by critic Jonathan Ross Smith, and more.

For extreme horror fans and Jörg Buttgereit buffs, Culti Epics assembles **Sex Murder Art**, a gila 4-disc Blu-ray collection litting up a quartet of the Teutonic provocateur's signature films—the necrophilia-focused **Nekromantik** (1987) and sequel **Nekromantik II** (1991), the violent death and suicide-themed anthology **Der Todestanz** (The Death King) (1990), and the intense serial-killer thriller **Schreien** (1995). Among the plethora of special features are two versions of **Nekromantik**, fresh filmmaker retrospectives, audio commentaries, interviews, bonus short films, music video, soundtrack CDs for each film, an illustrated 40-page booklet and more. Culti Epics will be launching a companion line soon, Real Gore Releasez, from now on Facbook.

Vinegar Syndrome presents **Rody Ray** on Blu-ray with its bonus-bonus edition of "comical actor" filmmaker Rody Ray Moore's 1975 big-screen blaxploitation debut **Dolemite** (2-disc Blu-ray; DVD Combo Pack). The copious extras are highlighted by **L. Dolemite**, a fascinating making-of documentary wherein the late, great Rody Ray describes his unique showbiz odyssey in his own unimpeachable words. Also joining the backlist: **Bar-plotation** rando, via Warner Archive, in **High A**; Robertson's **Methods** (1972), starring Calvin Lockhart as a doggy out to aul a slain woman's killers.

TELE-VIDEO

Acorn Media gets the crime-fighting route with two new collections. **Nail Run** stars as Detective Senior Sergeant Mike Shepherd, a big-city enforcer adjusting to small-town New Zealand life, in *The Brokenwood Mysteries, Series 2* (2-disc Blu-ray, 4-disc DVD \$59.99 each). The set contains a quartet of feature-length installments starring Fern Sutherland as Shepherd's young assistant, along with bonus cast and crew interviews and a photo gallery. **Montercal serves as the setting for 19-2, Season 1** (3-disc DVD \$49.99), featuring Adrian Holmes and Javed Khan as police partners, the 10-episode set includes a behind-the-scenes featurette. Also from Acorn, Patrick Swayze stars as Ian Hood, a scientific investigator for the British government who, aided by tough female bodyguard Rachel Young (Ashley Jensen), battles a wide array of exotic menaces in the four-episode **Eleventh Hour** (2-disc DVD \$29.99), while Samantha Morton and John Hurt headline in the Dario Argento horror miniseries *The Last Panthers* (2-disc Blu-ray \$39.99), featuring a theme song, "Blackout," written and performed by the late David Bowie, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes and a photo gallery. High profile thespians, including Charles Dance, Sam Neill and Miranda Richardson, gather to face their likely doom in writer Sarah Phelps' violent, edgy reinterpretation of the Agatha Christie classic *And Then There Were None* (2-disc DVD \$29.99). Bonus material includes a behind-the-scenes featurette, an Agatha Christie profile, an interview with writer Phelps, and a photo gallery.

Elsewhere on the Euro scene, erstwhile spaghetti western star Tenebris (M1) returns as the apocalyptic detective/priest in a trio of new collections from M1's Choice. **Don Matteo Set 13, Don Matteo Set 14** and **Don Matteo Set 15** (4-disc DVD \$39.95 each). Each set contains an even dozen episodes with the economy cleric applying his unique religious powers to flesh cases. A canine sleuth takes center stage in the same label's German series *Inspector Rex Season 11 Volume 4* (4-disc DVD \$39.95), the German Shepherd shaman's adventures are currently aired in over 100 countries in 10 languages. M1's Choice also continues the acclaimed WWII series *A French Village: 1942—Season 3* (4-disc DVD \$39.95), starring Ashley Fleeter and Thierry Godard, documenting daily life under German Occupation, and imports the acclaimed Norwegian conspiracy thriller miniseries *Mannheim* (3-disc \$39.95), starring Jon Chaplin as an investigative reporter on a deadly assignment.

M1's Creek Entertainment reaches back to the '80s to retrieve a quartet of popular action series. *New Traditional* tropical cops *Soupy Creekies* (Don Johnson) and *Ricoardo Tabin*

(Philip Michael Thomas) take on criminal elements in *Miami Vice Season One* and *Season Two* (4-disc \$14.98 each). The sets contain 22 original episodes each with guest stars ranging from Edward James Olmos and Jimmy Smits to future *Pulp Fiction* adversaries Bruce Willis and Ving Rhames. David Hasselhoff roars along in the last-line country of his super-car K.I.T.T. in *Knight Rider Season One* and *Season Two* (4-disc \$14.98 each), containing 22 and 24 original episodes, respectively, while Jan-Michael Vincent flies the danger freight plane, with a wife held from it and Ernest Borgnine, in *Airwolf Season One* (2-disc \$9.98), assembling all 11 debut sketch episodes plus the original pilot movie. Time traveler Scott Bakula and holographic guide Dean Cain's return in the cult series *Quantum Leap Season One* (11 episodes 2-disc \$9.98) and *Season Two* (22 episodes 4-disc \$14.98).

Warner Home Entertainment intensifies the suspense with *Pretty Little Liars: The Complete Sixth Season* (5-disc \$49.99), wherein the endangered sisters seek to escape their tormenter. The set contains all 21 Season 6 episodes, along with a four-page of new behind-the-scenes featurettes and deleted scenes. In a similar sibling vein, *Swan Song* Katie, Patricia Kalember, Johannes Phillips and Sela Ward take on the titular roles in *Swan Song Season Four* (Show! Factory, 3-disc \$39.99) in all 22 Season 4 episodes, featuring guest stars like Jo (Beauty and the Beast) Anderson and George Clooney.

The current adventures continue in *Harvey: The Final Season* (4-disc \$49.98 Blu-ray, \$39.98 DVD), based on Stephen King's *The Colorado Kid*. The concluding set includes all 18 episodes, plus a re-visit of bonus features ranging from analysis behind-the-scenes featurettes to audio commentaries and interviews with cast members Lincoln Bryson, Eric Ballfour, William Shatner, Adam Copeland and Shawn Piller.

On both the Satellite of Love and right here on Earth, M1's Madmen abounds as Show! Factory keeps the boys and bots in the first new buzz with a trio of fresh sets. *Mystery Science Theater 3000 Vol. XXXV* collects Roger Corman's *Teenage Caveman*, starring Robert Vaughn in an over-the-top sci-fi riddle problem's adolescent, 1966's *12 in the Moon*, 1982's alien runaway romp *The Being from Another Planet*, and 1988's *Deathstalker and the Warriors from Hell*, along with a wealth of extras, from the featurette *Launching 12 to the Moon to Being's* original *Time Walker* short-story. *MST3K Vol. XXXVI* (4-disc \$39.97 each) sets hosts Joel Hodgson and Mike Nelson, abetted by trusty robot friends Crow T. Robot and Tom Servo, take new skewering another featurette of vintage chokers—1973's *Stranded in Space* (aka *The Stranger*), 1983's *City Limits*, with Robby Benson and Ron Dunn Chong, 1978's *The Incredible Melting Man* and 1976's *Riding with Death*—likewise complemented by copious bonus material. Show! also restores a quartet of



out-of-print episodes in *Mystery Science Theater 3000 Volume Two* (4-disc \$44.97), containing the features *Angels Revenge*, *Cave Dwellers*, *Pod People*, and the collection *Shorts Vol. 1*. Few films brought out the Sat. area's cheerfully conservative brilliance more than cheesy backside promotional and propaganda shorts selling shabby agendas to usually caprine audiences. Highlights include the neurotically obscure *Body Care & Grooming*, Heck (*Carnival of Sins*) Harvey's scholastic seconded *Why Study Industrial Art?* and the truly chilling *Father Known Best* style brain-wiring exercise *A Date with Your Family*, which our off-steps greet with a flustered funny two-fade of cutting gaps.

Show! Factory returns to Darragh's 1980 McKinley High in *Franks and Gunko: The Complete Series: Blu-ray Collector's Edition* (9-disc \$110.00). The set assembles all 18 episodes of Fred Ford and Jacki Agnew's short-lived but influential comic series, featuring a young James Franco, Seth Rogen, Linda Cardellini, and Jason Segel, available with both original full-screen and new widescreen options. Among the copious bonus features are new interviews with creators Ford and Agnew, 28 cast and crew commentaries, audition footage, outtakes, bloopers, behind-the-scenes segments, promotional spots, booklet and more.

Time Life ventures further back, into the '60s, with *The Wonder Years Season Five* (4-disc \$49.95). The set gathers all 24 Season 6 episodes charting the high school escapades of Kevin (Fred Savage) and friends, backed by a chance soundtrack featuring cuts by The Byrds, Canard Heat, Goodies Character Revival, James Brown and many more. Extras include the featurette *Will You Love Me Tomorrow: The Wonder Years' Love Stories*, a Season 5 Farewell Set Tour, plus interviews with cast members Olivia d'Abo and David Schwimmer. ☞

DAVIE ALLAN FUZZTONE TITAN!

As Told To
Terry & Tiffany DuFoe

Known fondly by his fans as "King of the Fuzz," greatest composer Davie Allan became a lead instrumental voice of '60s drive-ins via his driving soundtracks for biker classics like *The Born Losers*, *The Glory Stompers*, and, most iconically, Roger Corman's *The Wild Angels*, whose his "Blues Theme" became a major crossover hit single. Allan's compositions have since surfaced on *The Supremes*, in Quentin Tarantino's *The Inglebrink Brothers*, and Jim Jarmusch's *Night on Earth*, among dozens of other film and TV shows. Over the decades, Davie Allan has amassed an impressive discography and continues to record and play live dates today. One dynamic dad-and-daughter duo, Terry & Tiffany DuFoe, recently sat with Davie Allan for the following career-spanning chat.

TERRY DUFOE: Your latest releases include your 30th Anniversary CD and the *King of the Fuzz* guitar. When did these releases come out? Do the albums contain brand-new recordings or are they re-mastered from old tracks?

DAVIE ALLAN: Well, it's a little bit of both. They came out September and October of 2015. The reason that the *King of the Fuzz* guitar release came out is because this guy in Austin, TX, it's his label. His name is Freddie Steady Koe. He was setting up some shows to do in Austin, San Antonio and New Orleans and he wanted to have a CD to play and send out there. So I did that one and I was already working on getting the other one done. The label on the 30th Anniversary release is Carb Records. When I said I was doing that, people looked at me like "Why? Are you crazy?" But we won't go into it. You probably know the whole story anyway, but I just figured Mike Carb and I started The Arrows and I thought, "Well, this is the label it should be on." So, that's why I did that.

TD: We've listened to tracks off of the 30th Anniversary release. They sound fantastic.

DA: Thank you. That gives me a chance to tell you how "Apache" came about because I haven't told this story to anybody yet. A friend of mine, many, many, years ago, had access to the ranch that had a lot of my '50s recordings. He gave me a few background

tracks. He gave me the basic track to "Apache '65." All it was was a mono track, no lead, just the basic instruments. I thought, "Gee, you know something? I'm going to listen to this and mess with it." So, the song on the new album has the original track in the background, but I probably did 8-10 overdubs to make it new, in a way. When I held the label I was doing it, I said, "I want to tell this Apache '65-15." They would go for it! So then you got I didn't even tell them what I had done. If I ever talk to Mike Carb, I'm going to tell him that it's the original track. He's probably going to have a cow!

TD: That brings up a good question. Things have come so far in regards to technology from the 1960s to the present. It used to be that it was not possible to do one and play it song through, and that's what you would end up getting on tape. Now, with technology, you can do all the layering and you can use computers in post-edit in ways you never could before. How do you feel about that when it comes to creating new music, especially for CDs?

DA: I'm kind of torn between the old and the new. Up until maybe three years ago, I was still recording in a studio, basically live. I would record with a bass player and a drummer and I would play all of the leads live. Then I'd overdub the drums and other things. But, on this one, I finished this entire album by myself. I had a couple of tracks that hadn't been used before and I did it all on Pro Tools at home. I really had a blast with it, although sometimes I missed not sitting in there with the drums and the bass. On that version of "Apache," I'm actually playing bass, rhythm, and I even did a stereo down in there just to make the original track.

TD: Well, now you can be Davie Allan and The Arrows, a one-man band!

DA: Yeah, pretty much! There is not a definite Arrows group today. The guys from the '60s—I talk to them, but we haven't worked together since then.

TD: How did you first get involved in music and first form The Arrows?

DA: I was in high school. I was in choir. I was in three music classes—choir, drums and voice. Mike Carb was a part of all three of those. We met and we hit it off really, really quickly and we started doing some shows in the studio. Then we just thought about doing a record and came up with The Arrows' name. "Apache" had been such a favorite of mine from the Jorgon Lugano version that I wanted to do a faster kind of rock version. That's pretty much how it came about. Then we found other musicians that were at the same high school and it just went on from there.

TD: It is correct that it was through Mike Carb that you ended up getting a contract and working with American International Pictures?



DA: Yes, that's how that came about. As much as I love "Apache '65" and the follow-up "Steppenwolf '65," what really did it for the group was *The Wild Angels*. There's an interesting story there. In July, it's the 50th anniversary of *The Wild Angels* film, so I'm going to try to get them to put out a 2-CD set or something to go along with that. I'd love to be able to get ahead of Peter Fonda and Nancy Sinatra, but I don't know how to do that. I thought if they could re-release the soundtrack—Carb owns that soundtrack—I would go on and record remakes of a couple of the tunes, just to beef it up a little. I don't know if it'll come about, but this gives me a chance to talk about a little bit.

TD: What was it like working with Sam Arkoff and James Nicholson with AIP and how did you find Sam as a businessman?

DA: Well, I hate to disappoint you on this, but I didn't meet anybody. Mike Carb didn't want anybody in his space when he was doing business. So it was all through him. The only guy I met was a guy named Al Sims who had something to do with the music with all the films. He was the only one I did not go into a studio and have the film on the wall as we were recording. Nothing like that. It didn't bother me because I was in the studio doing these things for five years straight. Every day I was in the studio. It was a good time. I really did want to meet Roger Corman, but I didn't get to do that either. It do have another story about how we got *The Wild Angels*. You probably know of the short subject movie called *Skinnerbinner*. From what I heard, Roger Corman said that movie and said that that kind of music is what he wanted for *The Wild Angels*. So that's how that came about. Then that led to a couple dozen movie soundtracks. I didn't get paid what I was supposed to get paid, but it was so busy and having such a blast that I didn't even care.

**"We were almost booted off the stage because I guess the flower children just didn't care for it."
Davie Allan**

JD You were kind of the corniest one of your age who was a new genre of music. Of course, there were musicians like Dick Dale, who became very popular for doing the beach party films with A&P, but really the whole biker film genre became a type of movement of its own. How did you feel about being connected with these films?

DA I loved every single one of them. It's hard to watch them today—well, some of them! But it was a blast and I didn't really think anything negative. I just thought, "This is great! I'm so glad to be a part of this!" Now, there is one thing I should tell you. A bass player of mine, a few years back, said, "Don't you ever tell anybody that I've never been on a motorcycle!"

JD I would assume a perk of your career is that you have to be a sort of national hero in bikers everywhere!

DA I never hear from any of them, but you would think so! I think I played at one biker-type thing way back in the '60s, but nothing since.

JD You had alluded to this earlier but what is the status of the relationship between you and Mike Carb?

DA Well—I was shocked that he was gone, to release this. The biggest disappointment for me is here [on doing a 50th anniversary of something that he and I started together—and I started working on this in late 2004—and not once did he ever call me and say "Hey! I'm glad you're doing this." Nothing! I haven't talked to him one time. That's quite a disappointment. I've talked to the man guys there [Carb Records], but doesn't that seem bizarre? I just don't understand it. Also, I wanted to mention from the release, the song

"Shape of Things to Come" [from *Wild in the Streets*—that's the first time I ever sang that song I had kind of a blast putting that together. I actually did a couple of albums where I sang. I did a session called "Retrophone." It started in 2009 and I did "Retrophone 1-4." On one of them it's almost all vocals. Do you know the tune "Moonswag" from way back in 1960 by The Goodkings? My follow-up to "Apache '65" was called "Moonswag '65" and that's why I put that on this album, too. I went to my drummer from the '60s who had done the howling dog in it. He said he didn't remember how he did it, so my wife actually did the dog sound that you hear in this thing. Some people have actually said they thought it was a real dog! She's not a dog! She had a blast doing it. I really had to talk her into it because she didn't want to do it, but the minute I heard her trying to do it I thought, "Okay, this is what we've got to do!" So every time you hear her do it on that song, just think about that that's my wife doing that dog in there. It's different each time she does it. I think she recorded it about eight times or something.

JD Was "Moonswag '65" the song that appeared in the 2009 Quentin Tarantino film *The Inglourious Basterds*?

DA No, that was "Don't Be Rascable" from *Devil's Angels*.

JD Did you hear directly from Quentin Tarantino when your song's involvement in the film came about? I know that he is a huge cult movie fan.

DA Oh, I know he is. I was really thrilled to get that in there. That's another thing that Carb does the master, but I did get half writing credit, which was really great. It paid a few bucks. What I did is I submitted about nine spaghetti western tunes. Two of them are on the *King of the Fuzz* Greatest album, "7th Calvary" and "Little Big Horn." I submitted them for his film *The Hateful Eight* and he turned them all down. But he used Ennio Morricone, so I don't feel so bad!

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JD You're no stranger to contributing music to more contemporary film. I believe you even did a version of "Feltz's Reverend" for the Christmas with the Kranks feature film in 2004, right?

DA That was great and Jose [Tellesano] would probably get a kick out of it. Although he probably knows that I recorded it. You would think he would know all the different versions that were done. That was on an album called *Fuzz for the Holidays*, a Christmas album from 2004. That's where that came from. Steven Van Zandt—it was on his label.

JD What would make the King of the Fuzz: wake up and say, "Hey, I should do a Christmas album?" When you think of guitarists, you don't really relate these to Christmas carols.

MUSIC FROM THE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK
THE WILD ANGELS
and OTHER THEMES
DAVIE ALLAN AND THE ARROWS



ALL ORIGINAL RECORDINGS

DA Yeah, I don't know. I just love all those Christmas tunes and just decided I'd do it. I did it mostly my style, but all the melodies are there. I did two of them. I did *Fuzz for the Holidays* in 2004 and I did *Fuzz for the Holidays 2* in 2007. I had one song in a *Sopranos* episode called "The Lord, the Loose and the Savage."

JD That was in an episode from 2004, right?

DA Yes, the same year, 2004 in which I was doing a couple of things with Steven Van Zandt. That was kind of a neat thing, too.

JD Are you looking at continuing to do your own thing or do you really want to get into doing more stuff for movies and television?

DA I have never actually scored a movie but I've got to many times that would fit. You know, they take pre-recorded stuff and they edit them the way they want to do, I'm still trying to get stuff in films. But, hey, it's a tough one. I've got contacts but if the main producer doesn't like it, he's not going to use it. I do plan to continue trying to do the same thing.

JD Tell our readers what kind of a guitar you play, and what does the term "fuzz" mean?

DA Oh, good question. The guitar I have is pretty old. It's the 50th anniversary of my guitar, too! It's a Fender Jazzmaster, which doesn't make a lot of sense, does it? Fuzz? I have had new pickups put on and everything, but it's 50 years old, and that's the same one I'm still using. As far as the fuzz, I think it came about when "Don't Worry" by Marty Robbins came out. It sounded like somebody had punched a hole in a speaker. This bass solo, it was just totally distorted. I had a fuzz box called a Gibson Maestro which was the same one that Keith Richards had on "San Francisco." Like on that, I told that one. Today I'm using one by a company Pro Co. It's called The Kat and that's the one I've been using since '91 or '94.



"I don't know how he was able to do this but he made 'Blues' Theme' a hit."

Davie Allan on Casey Kasem

TD: What would your advice be for new guitarists trying to make a name for themselves in the business?

DA: I've told you what they should do, and I didn't do it. They should really learn the guitar. Learn how to read [music]. Just go out of your way to really make sure you know what you're doing. At the same time, have a day job because I'll tell ya, it's been tough! I've had years where I didn't make anything. It goes back and forth. I took a few lessons and I thought, "Oh, I don't need this" because I started recording. I thought, "Well, I guess I'm okay." Hey, I've regretted it ever since because there is so much I really don't know I never really learned to read that well, so that cost me a few seasons. That's the main thing. Just really know your instrument and you should do well.

*TD: I understood that you actually had a couple of appearances on screen as well. You were in the 1968 film *Jessie: Wife of Child*. That was kind of a "lucky" exploitation film, if you will, kind of in the vein of *Child Bride*. What was it like doing that film?*

DA: That was a blast. We did it all in a couple of hours. Our part was just playing at a bar basically. So, we [The Arrows] didn't have a speaking part or anything. Now you're going to mention another one: *Wild Wheels* maybe? I was on that one and a couple of TV shows.

*TD: *Wild Wheels* definitely. But the other project I was going to mention is that you actually were in an episode of *Get Smart*!*

DA: Right, right! *And The Invaders*, the same year.

TD: How did that come about?

DA: *The Invaders* was because I recorded a version of the theme song. I called up and I said, "How do I go about getting the rights to do this?" In the meantime, I had recorded it Mike Cash put it on an album, changed the title, and took the publishing rights. When I called these people, they said, "Well, why don't you come down and be on one of these episodes?" That led to getting *Get Smart* also. It was just one of those crazy things.

*TD: You did a gig at The Hallaballo on Sunset Blvd. I guess right when your career started taking off with the *Blues* films, it was really the Summer of Love. Were you worried*

about the youthful audiences at the time really appreciating the music for what it was?

DA: I wasn't afraid of anything, really. I thought this gig would be like all the rest of them. Every thing was pretty cool, but we got in there and we're playing and all of a sudden we're getting booed. They're throwing coins up on the stage and all this stuff. I mean, we were almost booted off the stage because I guess the flower children just didn't can for it. It was a two night gig. The next day I went to a toy store. I bought four sets of bows and rubber-tipped arrows. We got to the club that night and we start doing our act. They started booing us again. We took out the bows and arrows and we shot those rubber-capped arrows into the audience and they went crazy! They loved it! All of a sudden they were happy with us!

TD: Do you have any fellow guitarist friends who you hang out with? Do you by chance know Dick Dale or Niko Edwards from The Ventures? Who is the guitar world do you hang in with with?

DA: I keep in touch with Dick Dale. I was almost on his show the other night but it fell through for some reason. He played at The Whiskey on New Year's Eve in 2015. Who else? Boy, there isn't anybody else. I guess I'm in my own world here. It's a little sad!

TD: So you don't hang out with a certain Mickey Bradbeer that you went to high school with, who is known under a different name in the public?

DA: You mean Mickey Dolenz? Yeah, we went to the same high school at the same time! I was doing a club at The Valley in '61 I guess it was 1960—and he would come in every night we were playing and would want to jump up there and do a song or two with us. So we thought, "Oh, okay!" We knew who he was and he said he was going out for a TV show. The next thing you know, he's a Monkee! So that was it! We didn't run into him anymore after that.

TD: I know you actually wrote a song for Dick Dale called "Vanishing Street" in 1966. Did you just write it for him or did he ask you to write a song for him?

DA: No, I actually sat down and said, "I'm going to write him a song." I even have a part in the middle that was going to be for him to play trumpet on because I know he plays trumpet, too. I sent that to him. We did a thing at some kind of a get-together, signing autographs and stuff, and he told me that his son, who at the time was a little kid, was going around the house burning this time. I thought, "Oh my gosh, I think he's going to record it!" And he never did! So I put up on stage and I'll tell people, "I wrote this for Dick Dale!" And they start screaming. And I say, "Well, he never recorded it—so I did!"

TD: I've heard you had a connection with Curry Kasem. Can you tell us about that?



DA: What a honey of a man he was. He was just the greatest guy. I got to meet him when we submitted "Blues" Theme" to radio station KRLA. Remember, that was a powerhouse back then. That one and KHJ were the buggies. I don't know how he was able to do this but he made "Blues" Theme" a hit. I really think that's true. I ran into him a few times since then. He was just so sweet and kind to me as ever. What a wonderful person! When we lost him, I was quite sad about that.

*TD: Who was it that actually sang *The Wild Angels* theme? I know this topic has been debated among film fans. A lot of people have argued that they thought it was Ronny Siskin.*

DA: She was approached and she turned it down. I don't know why but she did. Who they got was someone who I think was a friend of one of the guys, Harley Housler, who wrote some of the songs back then. Her name was Harben Pittman and she had been a Sun Records Label artist when Elvis was there. If you use the original album, there was no list of musician credits or anything on the cover. Nancy Sinatra, when she found out somebody had sang the song, she was going to sue. So they had to add a little piece on the front that said who the artists were. I think it said "The Vipers featuring Bradburn" or something like that. I wonder if we could even get ahead of her [Nancy] today. I would love to hear her sing that song today but I don't even know if she's singing anymore. I didn't meet her until 2003 at the 100th anniversary of Harley Davidson in Las Vegas. I walked up to her and introduced myself. I told her when my band was new and she said, "So's mine!" We were both born on June 8th. Different years, but the same day! She said, "Well, there's four of us standing here." You know, Gemini, the twins? She was adorable! Peter Fonda was there too. There's a picture of the three of us from that day. It's really cool.



JD What did you think of the movie genre that then became affiliated with the drug counterculture, groups like Jefferson Airplane and The Electric Prunes. Who are some of your favorites?

DA My favorites are The Beatles and Electric Light Orchestra. As far as the drug culture and music, none of that bothered me. I think I was so naive, I didn't even know what was going on. I was never a druggie.

JD Is there any chance that you would consider, at some point, writing a book about your life and career?

DA Oh boy, I have talked about that so many times. I even met with somebody a few years back. I was going to write it with somebody. He took it to his publisher and they said, "No, we're not interested in this." I think part of it is that you can't really say much about Mike Oak without getting in deep shit. Briefly, I'll tell you why they do that. LuAnn Platter and The Judds and one other artist took him to court because they were unhappy. They wanted out. They lost and he kept them on the label. This is a powerful guy, so nobody wants to really touch that part of a book. So, I don't know what to do. I've threatened to write a book for money, many years. Not that I threatened him—just, well, the audience!

JD Do you have any dates that are coming up in 2014? The fans still want to be able to go see you perform live!

DA I did a lot of dates last year, the most I've done in a few years. Probably in the summer I'll do something.

JD I'm sure you've heard from your fans that you're nothing in person like what they expected.

DA I hear that all the time! They expect this buffy, biker type image, right? And it's just not there. When I get on stage, though, I'm just as gawky as ever. ☺

JANIS: '60s SIREN!

JANIS: LITTLE GIRL BLUE (2014) **★★★★**
D: Amy J. Berg. Cat Power (narrator), Karlson Bennett, Dick Cavett, Eric Clapton, Dave Grohl, Laura Joplin, Michael Joplin, Julian Karpun, Kris Kristofferson, Country Joe McDonald, Dave Nash, D.A. Pennebaker. 105 mins. (DVD) Visuals \$16

Forty-six years after Janis's death from an overdose at age 27 (doomed 23, some say Jani Hendrix, Jani Morrison, Amy Winehouse and Brian Jones), the pang of her loss, at the moment she was expanding her already considerable talent, still smart, and her peers, band mates and on-again, off-again lover David Nash, still old men now, still rue up moaning her death. The contours of her life are well known: born in 1943 in prominent Port Arthur, Texas, growing up feeling out of step and ostracized at school; discovering at 17 she could sing like Ella Fitzgerald, finding a psychic home in San Francisco, and helping write the history of classic rock. Janis fills in the gaps, revealing through Janis's letters home—she wrote faithfully to her loving but penny-pinching waiting their approval in an old-fashioned, courtly style—as well as people who knew her and worked with her, the auditions, barbs, separation and disappointments, personal, musical and commercial, that created the enduring myth. If you can't get enough of Janis, see this doc. It's utterly complete. In Port Arthur, Janis liked "jacking the bad guy." It became the Janis brand, but this doc shows how nearly impossible it was for her to get her very mediocre Big Brother and The Holding Company band mates to take her seriously or give her the respect she commanded in the studio. They were upstaged and pushed, of course, but even later viewed on television, her elegant laughs into her music talent were considered hippie blather, she was treated like a little girl. The doc tells the professional and personal stories well, suggesting how Janis picked up her signature stammer rhythm from Otis Redding, giving info on the sessions rivaling backstage at the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival, and expertly weaving the recollections of numerous scene makers—Big Brother manager Julian Karpun, Dick Cavett, Kris Kristofferson, the equally ambivalent Country Joe McDonald, boyfriend David Nash, who fell in love with a girl in a bikini on Ipanema Beach without knowing it was Janis, among many others. Then there's the archival footage: Otis Redding, The Who, Cass Elliot, wide-eyed in wonderment, watching Janis on stage. Jerry Garcia, Yo-Yo and Janis Embedded in the folkie story of the drugs. Janis can't explain it or do what those beatnik-old men still want: come up with a better ending. Extras include *Avril 14*, *The Fillmore*, *Big Brother Singing Acapella Influences*, and *Walk of Fame Ceremony* shorts. ☺

—Nancy Naglin



ROCK AROUND THE SCHLOCK

Elsewhere on the music scene HBO Video spotlights the rock matriarch **Viagra: The Complete First Season** (6/16, 4-disc \$99.99. Blu-ray \$49.99 DVD). Our initially high hopes for the show were slowly dashed over the course of its 10 episodes run, done in by heavy rock and neo-noir tropes, rife historical inaccuracies (such as the phony balcony Warhol Factory incident), negative story arcs, and prating Richie Finestra's (Bobby Cannavale) increasingly unconvincing plights. Co-creator Mark Jagger's offspring Steven, meanwhile, cast as an aspiring secret-shed-on-prison-punk rocker, seems in desperate need of charisma therapy, while deservedly berated director Martin Scorsese bowed out after belaboring the same intriguing feature-length debut episode. Despite a few bright flashes, like Roy Romano and Max Casella's turns as pre-midnight scenes, *Viagra* serves up more schlock than rock. As Pope once put it: To be a woman, to control, divine—and we wouldn't mind if *Viagra* met that very fate. And speaking of flash, Jonathan Demme's sleep-enriching dreamily *Rock and the Flash* (Sony Pictures, 11/15), driven by scripter Diablo (Janis) Cody's off-on-conflict dialogue, plays out as a timeless companion of contrived characters and clichéd situations overflying with false notes. As for perennial star Meryl Streep's stab at rock idol dom, we can only advise: Ms. MS, stick to your day job. *Parade* Rock's blue-and-white Fender Telecaster even failed to soothe the eyes, double-ditto for screen siren Rock Springfield's business-colored Duesenberg. On a more upbeat note, MVD Visuals issues several spirited music documentaries highlighted by *Pride and Joy: The Story of Alligator Records*, *The Kingdom of Zyrden*, and *Zydeno Crusade: A Tale of Two Cities*. ☺

—The Phantom

KENNY MILLER: KNOWING BOWIE

By Mandy Howard

Kenny Miller is best known for his roles in cult classics such as *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* and *Touch of Evil*. In the midst of his film career, Miller was also making waves in the music industry, recording pop albums with legendary producer Shel Talney. One of his fondest memories is of his "little buddy," an enthusiastic young songwriter named David Jones, who would later become one of the most influential pop stars of all time, David Bowie — MH

MANDY HOWARD: You are known mostly for your film and television work, but you also had a successful music career, recording in London at the onset of the British Pop Music Invasion. How did that happen?

KENNY MILLER: It was the early '60s. I was in Europe to do a movie that ended up being canceled. When it was clear the movie wouldn't be made, Shel Talney, a producer in London whom I had known since back in Springfield (Ohio, Miller's hometown), asked me to stay. He said, "Well, I want to see what we can come up with. You know I've always wanted to record you, Kenny." While I was recording for him, he found The Who and Chad & Jeremy. He had the biggest ears in England. Shell got me a contract with EMI Records, which was the biggest recording company in London at the time; they also had a group called The Beatles.

MH: It was there you met a young man named David Jones?

KM: Yes, there was a young guy who was as ambitious about writing. He used to work in one of Shel's offices in the West Side of London. He was such a wonderful little guy with blonde curly hair, and his name, funny enough, was David Jones. He was always working and writing, but he never could get anything recorded until we were looking for the second side of my record, "Bonfire." We couldn't seem to find the right song for the B side. Dave came up with this record and said, "This is so perfect. I wrote this for Kenny." He played it and, my God, it was wonderful. It was rock 'n' roll, jazzy, just a really fast, wonderful song, but Shel said no. Well, Dave had somebody record part of it and he put it on a jukebox out in London while we [Talney, Miller and Jones] were out in the pub. We were listening to it and Shel said, "That's a pretty good song." I was singing along to it and Shel said to Dave, "Hm, well, Dave, are you going to sing it?" Dave said, "No, I wrote it for Kenny." So Shel asked me, "Well, Kenny, do you like it?" It's a hard song to sing," I said, "I love that song! It's so crazy!" It was called "Take My Tip," and that was my first recording for EMI Records. I thought that poor Dave was going to have a heart attack because he'd finally gotten one recorded. Dave was so ambitious. He was so aware of the fact that he was going to be a big name in the business. He used to go to the corner of the square, where people waited in line to go into the theater. He would put down a little basket and sing and be funny because he was really funny. Plus he was such a cute little guy, the people just loved him and they would throw a little money in the pot. Dave would say, "Come on down, I'm going to go sing on the corner tonight, Kenny. Come on, you can sing with me." I thought, I'm not going to sing with you, I'm a professional singer! He had such a great outlook on life and such a great sense of humor. Sometimes when I would go, I would get so excited that I'd start singing with him and then the people in line would ask me to sing and he'd say, "What's going on here, mate? I'm supposed to be the English person who's singing! Now they're making you to sing and that's where all my money's going to go."

MH: It was a few years after that when David Bowie emerged. Did you know right away that David Bowie was the Dave you had worked with?

KM: No! Because he was still David Jones! My record on the B side, "Take My Tip," says Dave Jones.

MH: When did you realize that David Bowie was the David you knew?

KM: When did you realize that David Bowie was the David you knew?

KM: I came back to America and started making movies, so I lost track of Dave. He was in Europe most of the time. I kept in touch with the secre-



by Kenny Miller
with Donald Vucchan

tary [at EMI Records], Anne. She would let me know what was going on with the other people that I knew. One time I was talking to Anne and I asked, "Whatever happened to David? I never hear anything from David!" There was dead silence on the other end of the phone and she says, "What?" I said, "David! Is he still writing music?" Is he recording?" She says, "Kenny, have you been living under a damn stone?" I said, "Living under a stone?" No! I like The Stones, but I... "I don't know the Rolling Stones, dummy. Are you asking me what happened to Dave?" I said, "Well, yeah. I was wondering what..." "Did you ever hear of David Bowie?" "Well, of course I've heard of him. I don't know his name that much but..." "Well, David Bowie is David Jones," she said. I said, "No, no, that's the guy that's on the Monkees!" She said, "No, not that Monkee. That's David. I'm going to hang up." And I said, "No! Wait! You gotta tell me what's going on!" That's how I found out. I couldn't believe it because David Bowie looked nothing like [the David I knew]. He had grown then, he had changed his hair, he had changed his looks. I said to Anne, "Anne, that is the most wonderful story and I'm so glad."

MH: What were some things you thought about when David Bowie passed away?

KM: The reality is, I hadn't seen him in more than 20 years. I was his long-lost buddy, or more, he was my long-lost little buddy from years ago. I have such wonderful memories of the past and just going in and raising hell. I knew I was very much a part of his life and we had so much fun together and laughed and laughed. It was a whole world of music and recording in that area of London. There was no place like it back then, there isn't a place like it now. ☺



The Phantom's '50s DRIVE-IN FAVES!

KIND LORRER FILMS

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THE BLACK SLEEP (1956) (R) (V) (W) (S)
D. Reginald Leffroy. Basil Rathbone, Alan
Tennill, Len Clancy, John Carradine, Bela
Lugosi, Herbert Rudolph, Patricia Blake, Tor
Johnson. 82 mins.

Handily topping the "most frightening ever ever" assembled by Ed Wood for the same year's *Plan 9 from Outer Space*, *The Black Sleep*'s fearfully formidable thespian troup includes two of Wood's notorious favorites, Bela and Tor (with only Vampire MIA here), along with genre guests Rathbone, Clancy, Carradine, and Tennill, who craftily struts his scenes as colorful Oxyph body watcher Odo. The plot is right out of an old Lugosi-Monogram chiller: e.g., *The Corpse Vanishes*, *Voodoo Man*! aptly mislabeled and named De Cadmus (an unusually arrogant Rathbone appearing in Bela's convoluted study) will stop at the proverbial nothing to restore his beautiful woman to active duty with the help of his immaculate nuclear chemical compound and a few human guinea pigs. To facilitate his nefarious goal, Cadmus saves wrongly accused fellow madman Dr. Ramsey (Rathbone) from the gallows to assist in his experiments, which have so far resulted in a number of colorful fatalities, most notably former brilliant colleague Dr. Monroe (Clancy), now a dangerous, talking, mind-fused monster rather grimacingly, if not downright crushingly, rechristened "Moggo." De Cadmus finds painful employment for another torched job, name father Cassius (Bela), but keeps Moggo's other fellow agents—including bearded madman Carradine and blind beehive Tor—stashed out of sight in the cauldron dangers. Talkie scenes dominate much of this threshold monstrosity, which, with its stage-like melodrama and stylized set designs pitifully exposed by Kino's probing probe. *Black Sleep*, frequently outdone more like a play than a film. Fortunately, that development only adds to the pic's intimacy, making its melodramatic machinations more compelling than they were when viewed in the movie's grungy old TV strings, where we first saw it come on. The limited libretto supposes boasts especially mannered theatrical choreography, as Carradine's craved "convulsion" leads a lethal charge against the not-a-good doctor. Except for Bela's mad, speechless cameo in what would be his (Kino's) farewell, *The Black Sleep* (aka Dr. Cadmus's Secret) supplies a wealth of vintage Monster Kid fun. Extras

include an entertaining and informative commentary by film historians Tom Weaver and David Schacter, a Trailers from Hell segment hosted by filmmaker Jim Joe Dine, and the original theatrical trailer.

DONOVAN'S BRAIN (1953) (R) (W)

(S) (S) (S)

D. Felix Faust. Lew Ayres, Gene Evans, Nancy Davis, Steve Brodie, Tom Powers, James Anderson. 83 mins.

As Joe Dante points out during his Trailers from Hell segment, *Donovan's Brain* was sold to TV only a year or so after its theatrical run, branding it as an early intro to the genre for handy student Monster Kids in the making. (Back when we first caught it, *Brain* was still a bit above our head.) German emigre Curt Siodmak adapts his own novel (and was initially set to direct as well) dealing with the aggressive cerebrum of the eponymous evil industrialist being kept alive and functioning by scientist Ayres and a pair of assistants, Sam Fuller regular Evans and future First Lady Davis. Said brain gradually gains control of Ayres' mind and demands he do its bidding, the same convincingly conveyed by his now split personality, grip-pounding between an earnest, idealistic scientist and a ruthless, amoralistic tycoon who projects a Robert Vaughan-like imperiousness. *Brain* (whom Dante describes as "hipper Eliaha Cook") is terrific as a sleazy yellow photographicist who blackmails Ayres in return for an exclusive story. While a bit stilted in stretches, the film's main routine never overplays its welcome and retains Joseph P. Three keeps viewers' eyes alert with his typically sharp, atmospheric cinematography. Film historian Richard Dyer-Smith furnishes a film-length commentary, the original theatrical trailer is also included. We're still waiting for W. Lee Wilder's (Bela's less talented brother) wackier variation on the theme, *Man Without a Body*, featuring the likes of Neutrons, to land a legit release, but until then *Donovan* will do.

GOO (1954) (S) (S) (S)

D. Herbert L. Strick. Richard Egan, Constance Dowling, Herbert Marshall, John Wengert, Philip Van Zandt, William Schiller. 85 mins.

The branchchild of future *Flipper* mastermind Ivan Tors, *Goo* possessed the potential to be a neat tale about isolated humans trapped and tormented by hostile forces, a la *It!* *The Terror* from *Beyond Space* and Ridley Scott's more elaborate *Island of the Lost*. But is consistently undone by dull characters, dawning exposition, dopey robot designs and desperate attempts to walk the 3-D fence with flying axes, spring mechanisms, and thrusting rocket hoes. Even those over-the-top science babes meant to provide male kinks are ugly double boobies, let alone triple va-voo level here (though one of the best appears quite seriously aroused during the film's climax). To be honest, we've never been a major



fan of 3-D, especially '50s style. We've enjoyed the process when utilized for hallucinogenic purposes, as in 1961's collated acid trip *The Monk* (also recently restored by Kino), but back in the day we went to the bios specifically to escape the world of three dimensions and revel in the flat magic of the movies' alternate reality, not to have Richard Egan in our face or Herbert Marshall on our lap (*Barbarella*), on the other hand, would have made a definite exception.) In *Goo*, our hardware story concerns a puzzle of scientists squabbling in an elaborate underground coliseum working on space-travel research with the stuporous assistance of a 500ms super-computer named NOVAC and a pair of rather awkward robots dubbed Gog and Moggo who permeate with a sort of silly, Freddy Frankenstein-esque swagger. When human personnel are filled by mysterious acts of sabotage, security agent Egan goes undercover to get to the bottom of the subterranean conspiracy, eliminating flesh and blood suspects and arriving in on the mechanical suspects. Kino's almost eye-poppingly bright film may make the movie's supernatural early-colored sets look less like a poster set in film than a live action cartoon, adding an unexpectedly surreal element to the spectacle that supplies a jarring total counterpoint to the fairly gruesome fates suffered by several of the cast. What's Kino's fresh edition—augmented by a film commentary by film historian Tom Weaver, soundtrack scholar David Schacter and 3-D master Bob Fosse, along with excellent archival interviews with profile director/actor Strick and 3-D cinematography wizard Lodovico B. Worth, plus a restoration demo—reps a must for '50s genre buffs. *B*

They Came From The Basement!

By John Seal

TRACK OF THE MOON BEAST (1970)

STV 812

17 Richard Ayck, Chase Corbell, Leigh Drake, Giuseppe Sula, Patrick Wright, 84 mins (MHI Creek DVD, Phase VHS, n/a)

First things first: *Track of the Moon Beast* has a terrible reputation. It's #53 on DVD's "bottom 100," with a median rating from almost 3,000 users of 2.1 stars out of 10. Fans talk of "golden turkeys" frequently rate this film as a screen contender for worst of all time. In short, virtually no one has a fond word to say about it.

I am here today not to fully rehabilitate *Track of the Moon Beast* (for such would not be possible) but to play devil's advocate on its behalf. Is it, for example, better than the collected works of Jerry Warren, which is badly underrepresented in DVD's Hall of Shame (only *The Wild World of Batwoman* features, at #41)? Yes. Is it better than 1999's horrendous family comedy *Baby Genies* (#64)? Emphatically! Indeed, if you can accept *Moon Beast* on its own terms, I think you'll enjoy it—and don't worry, I won't tell anyone if you do. It'll be our little secret.

The action begins as an astronaut observes a strange, flaming object (obviously, a strange, flaming object *dropping* on a strange, flaming object) on a planet orbiting the solar system. We are advised that it's an asteroid on a collision course with the Moon, and its arrival attracts the attention of scientists, newscasters and those scholastic '70s horror-movie students, Native Americans, some of whom we see frantically gathering towards the skies. Meanwhile, a chance encounter in the desert wastes astrologist Paul (Corbell) with oncologist-narcologist Professor Jeremy Langhove (Sula), his only credited film role—a pity, as he's the best of a thoroughly mediocre cast, who's taking beautiful photographs of Kathy Nolan (Leigh Drake) and a handful of grad students on a watershed tour. Though Kathy is supposed to be working on a story about the local Indians' tribal rituals, she's noticeably distracted by Paul's shiffling nose. Maybe she can submit a story about grades material.

The interval has the Moon and sends a shower of cosmic fragments heading towards the desert Southwest just as Paul and Kathy head into the vast emptiness of the New Mexico night to get to know each other a bit better—or, take some photographs. Caught in a rain of confusion smashes—sorry, "cosmic rocks"—the couple drives for cover, but not quickly enough: one of them hits Paul in the



head. Unfortunately, it's more than just a flesh wound: the cosmic shard has pierced Paul's skull and lodged in his brain, where it begins to project its malign influence. Manifested first by full moon fits of dizziness and fever, Paul's "infection" eventually transforms him into a rubber-stated monster that immutes the desert locals. And that's not the worst of it: after a crucial X-ray, doctors inform him that the fragment will eventually turn him into a walking atomic bomb. How? Who knows, and who cares?

If not for its '70s hairstyles and clothing (as well as Frank Lammie's prominently featured flagpole number "California Lady"), *Track of the Moon Beast* could easily pass for a film made 20 years earlier. Directed by Richard Ayck and written by Bill Finger and Charles Scharf, the film has no profanity, no nudity and (forming one brief and choice kiss) no sex, which gives it limited to a single dismembered arm. In addition to the aforementioned "special effects," it features a scientist who turns into an atomic monster resembling *The Alligator People* (1959) via increasing time-lapse photography *a la I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (1957). Our lone scientist is in love with an ostensibly professional woman, who's basically eye candy, but they don't consummate their relationship. No one so much as says "fing," and the film's incidental music has been composed by Louis and Dede Dixon of *Forbidden Planet* fame. In other words, *Track of the Moon Beast* is the complete antithesis of the tack, tack, Seventies, and is in almost every respect a classic 1950s creature feature—which is why, I suspect, it's held in such disdain today.

Released in possible condition on VHS tape by Prism Entertainment, *Track of the Moon Beast* has since appeared on several Broadstreet and MHI Creek neo-box sets. Prism's tape checks in at 84 minutes, and there are a couple of rough cuts at critical points that suggest there might be a bloodier cut sitting in a vault somewhere. In the world's only for a fully intact and digitally restored *Moon Beast* I submit that if there's room for Don DeBler Rivers in your collection, there's also room for one—just one!—Richard Ayck disc. Are you bringing, Retrocrush? ☿

Tim Ferrante's SCORING SESSION

A Double Dose of Joe Keenan: *Ship to Shore* (Phonix Co.'s *Basket Case 2* (1990) and *Frankenhooker* (1990) / John Douglas' *Crack in the World* (1965) / Rex Ortolano's *Horror Castle* (1963)

We lead off with thanks to our friends at Brooklyn's Ship to Shore PhonixCo, who kindly provided us with a preview of the upcoming *Basket Case 2* *Frankenhooker* vinyl soundtrack LP (STS-07). Yet right inasmuch Joe (Child's Play, Dead and Buried) Keenan's scores were originally scored in the U.K. on CD (Salva Screen FILMED 075) in 1990. For this edition, STS directly deals with Keenan by stepping back and letting the composer speak his work, and create the album he envisioned. I questioned the label's co-founder, Aaron Hanel, as to why track titles differed from the CD and that sequencing and running times were changed. He explained, "Keenan went back and re-did everything himself from the tapes. He re-sequenced everything and basically made the album he always wanted. We took a pretty hands-off approach and he delivered the goods in a big way." Indeed, The album contains *Frankenhooker*'s darker, more melodramatic symphonic colors over the track's lack of "Lookin' for Hooker." The main title cue is a subversive piece, warmly suggesting the rambling and anachronistic screenplay's blot of mad genius Jeffrey Frankenstein Keenan's excellent handling of all things seriously menacing are evident throughout. BC 2's music is equally sinister and appropriately creepier. "Gentry Venti the Fresh Show" is a standout. The double score LP is limited to 1000 units that's split into two 500 preorders with vinyl colors that complement each title. *Frankenhooker* is topped with opaque purple wax. BC 2 gets a red/black "bloody" one. Includes an insert with liner notes written by the composer. MSRP is set at \$22. Meanwhile, La La Land Records rescues John Douglas' *Crack in the World* score by using 33rpm 1-track mono DME (Dialogues-Electra) stems. Douglas provides a time-honored orchestral score for director Andrew Marton's understated sci-fi warner. The score is dramatic, urgent and stirring. That is its first availability in any form and is limited to 2000 units. The CD also contains Brian Georgeau's *Phase IV*, which premiered in 2005 as a vinyl-only release by Waxwork Records. We wrap with Quater Records' sensational 2-CD release of Rex Ortolano's wild and wonderful *La Vierge* (at Northington's *Horror Castle*). One can count the music as originally released on vinyl by CAM in 1964. Disc Two contains the debut of the complete score, in stereo no less. Unparalleled Ortolano excellence on every track! ☿

KILLER KANE! KANE HODDER'S GREATEST HITS!

As Told To
Corbie Hill

Behind Jason Voorhees' hockey mask, beneath Victor Crowley's deformed scar, and in unmemorable TV and movie action scenes lurks actor and stuntman Kane Hodder. Yet the man behind two of horror's most notable—and cruelest—slasher killers doesn't simply sit on his laurels. He stays busy. When I get Hodder on the phone, he'd recently returned from the East Coast, where he'd been filming and appearing at conventions. In addition to his usual horror roles, Hodder recently did the motion captures for the Friday the 13th video game due out later this year, and a documentary about his life, expected about the same time. Learn more about the link to Kane/Hodder/13 in our One of Hodder's Latest Films, *Smothered*, was him in a new kind of role. The John Schneider (*The Dukes of Hazzard's* Bo-Dee) film cast horror actors like Hodder, R.A. (Leatherface) *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre III*, Hatchet II) Michael, and Bill (*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*) 2. Money is washing-up versions of themselves who are down into a familiar slasher scenario, but in the limited rather than the hunters. "Tell people they have to watch it," says Hodder, "or I'll kill them." Kane shares further thoughts here-with.

CORBIE HILL: Let's talk about *Smothered*. What was it like to do a tongue-in-cheek film where you were kind of playing yourself?

KANE HODDER: It was great because I never get the opportunity to do comedy, really. To play a version of myself in a comedic way was a lot of fun, plus I had all my buddies in the movie. I associate produced with John because he wanted me to do it and asked for some suggestions of other people. We all know each other in horror, so I suggested Don Shanks (*Halloween II*), The Revenge of Michael Myers and R.A., and he was already thinking about Money. I used to work on *The Dukes of Hazzard* as a stuntman—I did several episodes of *Dukes*, which was a lot of fun. That was the first time I met John, way back then. He was pretty much a huge star at the time and very humble about the whole thing and really approachable and liked hanging out with the stunt guys. He was always in the back of my mind, when I started getting known for the Jason stuff and becoming more, in the public eye, I would always remember how people like John Schneider handled it and I would always remember to be fan-friendly and appreciate the fans like he always did, so he was a good influence on me in that respect. When he showed me the script, I thought it was brilliantly written. I had some ideas for the character. Plus, shooting it in Baton Rouge, I've done several films in Louisiana and I've always had a good experience.

CH: I immediately think *Hatchet*.

KH: We were in New Orleans for *Hatchet*. I did an action film back in the '80s called *Average Joe*, where I was in New Orleans for a couple months, so it's always been a good place for me to shoot. I've always enjoyed it there.

CH: Can you tell me about playing a washed-up version of yourself?

KH: It's interesting to think about your notoriety from that angle. When he first told me, "Yeah, you're going to play a version of yourself, but nobody's going to give a shit about you anymore," I thought, "Wow, that'll be an interesting challenge to make it fun and entertaining when we're basically bad actors and we're given no opportunity... what appears to be a good job, and then things start to go wrong." I thought it was an interesting angle to take. You never know when that type of thing could actually happen, especially if you're of the opinion that the fans don't matter, which is, of course, not the way I feel. Other people have felt that and don't appreciate the fans and, was enough, they become versions of themselves that we portray. I certainly would never want that to happen, but it was fun to create that in a humorous way.

CH: For sure you got to make fun of yourself.

KH: Oh yeah. R.A., and Don Shanks and Money and I know each other so well that we would ad-



Welcome Back, Hodder: Stuntman Jason Hatchet man Kane Hodder sees his turn in *Smothered*.

lib things to each other just to see what the response would be, and I love working like that. That's why I enjoy the comedy so much. Improv, especially written comedy, can be so awkward. If you're not afraid of it, it can be some of the best stuff you do. If you improv something, it definitely isn't going to seem awkward. It's always good if something seems completely real. If we're playing versions of ourselves, it needs to be believable and real, even if it's a caricatured version of ourselves.

CH: How did you make the mental switch from being the attacker to being the victim in the movie?

KH: I think any actor will tell you that they love being challenged by a role to do something different. You may be comfortable with something like killing people, like I am quite comfortable doing, but it's always interesting when somebody like John Schneider or Adam Green says, "I want you to do this now." Adam, in particular, has been such an amazing person to work with—everything I do with him he has me do something I never thought I would do on film. I just never anticipated anyone would want to see me, for instance, in a crying scene or a sex scene or something that warms the heart. An actor likes to be challenged and try something new.

CH: Why don't you take me to when you first started working with Adam Green.

KH: He is very much like Schneider, to me. They're different ages, of course, but they're brilliant minds with story. They're great writers and they come up with things on the spot of the moment, too. Just like an actor ad-libbing. John, after we already shoot a take, will say, "They, what if we did this?" A couple of times I thought it was brilliant that he did that.



**"Those of you who have taken a picture with me know that I actually do choke you pretty well."
Kane Hodder**

*CH Let's talk about some of Adam's left field ideas in the *Hatchet* films?*

KH Every other movie that I've done that involved me doing multiple kills on multiple victims, whenever I read the script I would always say "that's pretty good," but then I would add my own flavor to the kill to make it more brutal. With *Adam*, I almost never have to do that, because the kills were written so graphically that I would say, "Oh my God, that's how I would have done it." I don't add anything to it and I'm so uncomfortable with doing that. All the *Jason* movies, I always had to add stuff to the kills to make it more graphic or [interesting or brutal or something I always had to add my own touch to it, but with *Adam* I almost never had to. It was a weird sensation to think that someone was in *Flashed-up* in the head to I see. I never thought there was another person like that. For *Adam* to be able to create comedy within the *Hatchet* films, but not at the expense of the terrifying scenes, which I'm involved in—I thought that's a tough line to walk, where you're going to make stuff funny with out compromising the scenarios. Usually, a film is one or the other, and *Adam* was able to create comedy within a scary movie. That's tough to do.

*CH That is one of the hallmarks of slashers, and when he started coming out with his *Hatchet* films, it was like, "Oh, someone is doing this again."*

KH Right—instead of the scenes between the kills being somewhat boring, as in some of the post-*Friday* films. Some of the scenes between the violence were tedious, come on, let's get to the next kill. In the *Hatchet* films, it was just as entertaining in between.

CH Let's talk about arriving through the makeup and your different methods with Victor and Jason

KH Obviously, with *Jason* there are absolutely no facial expressions until finally, when the mask would come off. I've said it a thousand times, but it can be much harder to be scary without your voice or your facial expressions. At least with Victor I still had my facial expressions somewhat, but with the hockey mask it's all the same. It's very tricky to be frightening with that kind of restriction on your face, so you tend to try to do things with your body. What I have seen from other people who try that is they tend to overdo it, and then it doesn't look believable. It's, again, another tough line to walk where you have to do some exaggerated movements with your body to make it look scary but not have it look like you're trying to do that.

CH I read an interview where you mimicked Jason's breathing, where there's a war of breathing where it looks really serious.

KH Yeah, that was one of the things we came up with before we started shooting the first one that I did. I had the fall making on and I stood at myself in the mirror, thinking, "Man, if I don't do something when I'm staring at someone, then I'll look just like a mannequin." So that's when I started doing the different ways of breathing and I ended up settling for the heaving chest. Even though he's motionless, for the most part, staring at someone, he looks like he's about to explode. That's a tough thing to bring across on film if you can't do any thing but that. I just incorporated a certain way of walking that didn't look like I was trying too hard and the breathing thing. Fortunately, the fans responded to it.

CH What are your favorite interactions with the fans who come to conventions and really know your roles?

KH If you've ever met me at a convention, you've probably been choked by me. It's become a bit of a pose, in a way. I see people I've seen over the years and I know that I've choked them in



pictures, and they bring their bodies to meet me because they want to watch his expression when I actually choke him. Those of you who have taken a picture with me know that I actually do choke you pretty well. It seems to be kind of an initiation. When I see someone the next time, if I remember choking them, I say, "Hey, now you can take the nice guy pose!" People love it. I tried to stop for a while because I accidentally choked a couple of people unconscious and I thought, "You know what? I'd better stop doing this." I did a couple of conventions where I was at choking people and people were so disappointed. Peer pressure made me go back to it! Fans, they are so knowledgeable that they can read off all my *Jason* kills in order and all my *Victor* kills and they have top ten favorites and all. I try to do trivia questions sometimes that I think nobody would know if they weren't on the set that night, and they still know.

CH What does scaring people do for you?

KH It probably gets rid of a lot of stress. I'm probably a nicer person off the set than I normally would be because I get so much aggression out when I'm at work and even when I'm at a convention. I tend to have a short temper in life, so that helps temper that temper to get rid of aggression, just like working out hard. You go to work, you do some violent things to people and really expend some energy, and you go home and feel very relaxed. It's working for me.

*CH You were in the *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* finale. What is it like to go into the next world?*



A Journal About the Making of Kane Hodder's biography, *Unmasked*
THE KILLER & I
Michael Alosi

"You go to work, you do some violent things to people and really expend some energy, and you go home and feel very relaxed. It's working for me."
Kane Hodder

KH It was great. Once again, of course, I was under heavy makeup playing a *Headbanger* warrior, soldier, whatever you want to say, and I had done several episodes in the past, doing that. Mostly they were stunt jobs where I would do a fight scene or get killed in some way. It was fun being part of that. Even though I was never a big *Truk* fan when I was younger, I was always fascinated by the fans of the *Truk* stuff. They're just like horror fans—very loyal and very knowledgeable and not as weird as you might think if you're on the outside—just like people think horror fans must be screwed up in the head and worthless, mindless, people. Look at Mosley—he graduated from Yale University. We've got some intelligence within the community and within the fans. It was a lot of fun doing the *Star Trek* stuff, just being there. I remember doing a fight scene with a *Truk* crewmember and I thought, just for the hell of it, during the fight scene I'm going to grab the *Enterprise* emblem on his shirt and rip it off and hold it and keep it, which I did. After the fight scene, they were looking for it all over the floor and I said, "I have no idea." I kept it for years and eventually gave it to somebody I like to keep souvenirs, too.

CH You were also involved in *Monster* and *Su7en*.

KH I've never been trained as an actor and all of my work is all acting now. I finished that movie in Philly called *Death House* and I had tons of dialogue in it. In fact, I have my talent in dialogue, it's from working with people like Christine Theron [in *Monster*] and watching and just observing her. I was the stunt coordinator, so I was there all day, every day, just watching her work. It was fascinating to see how she got to certain scenes, so I think that was the best training I ever had.

CM Do you want to move into mainstream films or is your heart in slashers and horror?

KH I would say both. My heart will always be in horror because that's what put me on the map and I always enjoyed it before. I started working in it, but at the same time I love the challenge of any kind of character. I'd love to do some more mainstream roles and stuff, but I'll always enjoy killing another [victim] if

ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

THEY CAME FROM THE GARAGE!

GAMERGUT PICTURES
 (2-Disc Blu-ray \$24.99/\$5.96)
TRAILER TRAUMA 2: DRIVE-IN MONSTERAMA (2006) PG-13
 Compiled by Harry Gurner and George Raitz 2003
 100 min.

With its '90s knockoff titles, *Trailer Trauma 2* expands on the Gamergut Pictures' trailer comp formula by housing the original's 65-tile program (VS 598). For 2½ content, label honcho Harry Gurner teamed with renowned exploitation movie guru and collector George Raitz (in *drive-in* cost). The coming attraction incipits present an inspired array of studio releases and independently obscure gems, many of which you won't find anywhere else. Color corrected, expertly spaced and transformed at 4K resolution, the Gamergut comp's are among the top anti-hype discs of the genre. Impressive titles preserved for all time include Jerry Warren's *Frankenstein Island* (1981), a rare *Beverly Hills* under an alternate title *The Computer Killers* (1973), *Gothic Gang* (1968) and *Guinn What Happened to Coast Desires?* (1971). Especially well-executed trailers such as *Nightmare on Wax* (1969), *Barn! Offerings* (1976) and *The Last Continent* (1968) are highlights. Watch for *Blood in Satan's Claw* (1970), featuring a terrific Jackson Beck voice-over. Horsemaster's *Brain of Blood* (1971) is a trailer written and edited by Independent International's Sam Sherman and voiced by Lloyd Huns. His brilliant delivery of Sherman's script—"The brain of a dead man lives in a creature of horror!"—doesn't get any better. And listen for Ernie "Ghoulish" Anderson's excellence on *Andy Warhol's Frankenstein* (1978) and *Andy Warhol's Dracula* (1974) and the unmitigated Ronald Galt—the "Voice of New World Pictures' Trailers"—on *Scream of the Demon Lover* (1970). A notes-only and is *Die Rats and Keith (The Bloody Ape)* Crocker, who provide a fun and informative commentary track about the films and the fun culture of seeking them out on home-video aunts. They clearly appreciate that exploitation trailers, whether created by the producers themselves or anonymous teams at National Screen Service, were an authentic art form for which there is no equal. Jim Zaplatynski introduced the insightful liner notes and provides some original music. Stephen Romano created the cover art. The disc has been encoded AAC (all regions). Available via distributd.com Ⓜ

—Tim Ferrante

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 back issues today!
 See page 54 for details.



CAMP CORNER!

DRAFTHOUSE FILMS
 (2-Disc Blu-ray/DVD Duped Copy \$29.98/\$4.16)
DANGEROUS MEN (2006) PG-13
 D. John S. Rad, Michael Gendron, Kirby Miller, James Brockman, John Chao, Honey Goldberg, Midway Wiggins 80 mins.

Foreign filmmakers, from Israeli producer Golan and Glorbus (*Revenge of the Ninja*) to South Korean director Richard (Gang Justice, *Miami Connection*) Park, and Iranian auteur Amir (Screamers) Capri Shervan have often dabbled in the American genre waters with wild and crazy, to say nothing of incoherent, results, but none have hit wilder, crazier or more incoherent heights than John S. Rad. An Iranian architect and acquaintance of the above-mentioned Shervan, Rad (real name: Ashkaner Salehi) came to America in 1979 to embark on his dream project, an action movie mash-up involving female vigilantes, dedicated cops, brutal bikers, gay killings, and violent vehicular chaos. Literally decides on the making, Rad's *Dangerous Men* finally found its audience in 2006, when this nearly indecipherable *jam*-dropper played the midnight camp circuit to packed houses of disbelieving but appreciative viewers. Any attempt to summarize Rad's mélange of unconnected shots, beyond-accept abrupt, ridiculously staged fight scenes, three-store special effects, incomprehensible plotting and prolonged radical singing may comically relief (3) would be futile at best. Suffice it to say that if you're a genre-film phenomenologist (and we know that you are), you owe it to yourself to pounce on this one at once. As for the equally amazing backstory, Drafthouse Films' double-disc special edition supplies it in spades. Extras include a detailed booklet featuring the only full-length interview with filmmaker Rad, an audio commentary by genre scholars Zack Carlson and Ryan Connolly, *That's So Rad*, a documentary about *Dangerous Men*'s initial financial release, an interview with director of photography Peter Parris, a name-by-voice appearance by Rad on a vintage public access TV show, and theatrical trailers. Draftless. Ⓜ

—The Phantom

**Rob Freese's
DRIVE-IN
DELIRIUM!**

VCI ENTERTAINMENT
(\$24.99 3 Disc Blu-ray) 2/16

THE GIANT SPIDER INVASION (1975)

감독 김성민
D. Bill Rahone Steve Brodie, Barbara Hale,
Alan Hale Jr., Robert Easton, Leslee Parrish,
Bill Williams 84 mins

A black hole releases mini-meteors onto the back inhabitants of a backwater burg in Wisconsin. Mini spiders emerge from the crystalline meteors and wreak havoc on the townsies. Dr. Vance (Brodie) and Dr. Lauger (Hale) race against time as fast as senior citizens are able to put a stop to the arachnid invasion. Country thompson Kester (Easton) and his drunk wife Ev (Parrish) try to cash in on the meteoric crystals, while the sheriff (Hale Jr.) mugs for the camera and narrates his every chaotic line with aplomb (including a signature "Hi, little buddy!" to a high school-age character). When one of the spiders grows to Volkswagen proportions (because it is literally built onto a Volkswagen), the flick locks into high-camp gear and none of your senses is safe from its assault. We could spend all day picking this picture apart, denouncing its shortcomings and mistakes, an continuity errors and production bores, but this goofy movie defies all that critical gibberish. This is just a fun,

creaky-headed monster movie meant to be enjoyed only on that level. Kester and Ev are two of the most despicable characters ever consumed in film, but Easton and Parrish make them kind of sympathetic for a cheating husband and his alcoholic wife. If Hale Jr. were anything but a goofball here there would be no joy in seeing him appear in this flick. Once you think about the one giant spider in this movie being built onto a Volkswagen chassis, you can't help but smile and tip your hat to Rahone and his creative crew (And you have to admire the actors who are eaten by the thing, as they have to push themselves into its mouth while acting like they are trying to get away from it.) Story-wise, nothing really makes sense. Why meteorites filled with spiders would come from a black hole is anyone's guess. It doesn't matter. It just happens and in the world in which this flick inhabits, it works. There are a couple creepy parts but most of the bonus scenes produced by John "Bad" Carder's *Kingdom of the Spiders* (Shout! Factory). The cast all seem to be having fun. Parrish was quite an accomplished actress, with lots of TV and film credits, including such drive-in fare as *The Devil's 8* and *Charlie's Angels: Crash!* VCI puts out all the steps for this 3-disc release, with extras including copious cast and crew interviews, the new *Size Does Matter!* making-of documentary, photo gallery, trailers and TV spots, an HD-mastered version of the film's Super 8 incarnation (the original home movie format), a separate CD containing 84 tracks from the upcoming musical stage play, and much more. Tons of regional filmmaking and giant monster movies in general are urged to scope it out. Without question, the greatest giant spider movie ever filmed in Glenside, Wisconsin.

ARROW VIDEO
(\$89.95 2 Disc Blu-ray) 2/16

THE MUTILATOR (1994) 감독 김성민
D. Buddy Cooper Matt Miller, Frank Munner,
Bill Blacklock, Connor Rogers, Frances Ranees,
Jack Chatham 86 mins

In the opening intro, we see a little boy poisoning his father's hunting rifle as a birthday present and accidentally shooting and fatally wounding his mother. When the father returns home, he is so grief-stricken he makes (like he is going to kill) his son. Fast forward to present time (1984) and Ed Jr. (Miller) receives a call from his father to head to the coast to close up his hunting/fishing condo. Ed quickly conceals an alien for his friends to come along for their fall break. Soon there's a springy pop song singing about "Fall Break" and our parties are ready for a week of shenanigans. Unbeknownst to our teen chowhows, Big Ed (Chatham) is lying in wait, having finally decided to exterminate his only child, some 10 years after the accidental death of his wife. The teen chain goes through the course of picknicking around, making out, drinking beer, and systematically getting slaughtered by one psycho in residence without ever tipping the others off that they are in danger. The final face-



off between father and son ends in some of the most inspired splatter mayhem ever committed to celluloid. Director Cooper was always a film fan and this stands as his only movie, but he put everything he had into it. The flick benefits from the great setting, basically a resort town on the off season, which helps build the dread and isolation of the situation as the stalker casts down his prey. The young cast is excellent for this kind of movie, with Blacklock being especially likable, delivering a memorable role as the group can up Ralph. Ranees was in a number of low-budget shockers at the time, including *Breeders* and *Riot on 42nd Street*, as was Miller, who also appeared in *Breeders* as well as *Deadline Stories* and Frank Henenlotter's *Basket Case 2*. The gore splatter effects are courtesy of *Black Shroom*, one of the finest special effects artists who ever graced the slasher genre. His gallery of stomach-churning magic makes includes a frog in the throat, copious buttcheese choppings, offboard motor enervation, and the greatest effect of them all, the gory impalement of one unlucky female character on a giant puff ball. (This one is uncomfortable and disturbing to watch, shattering the full effect as it was never presented before, even on the old United Vision Video VHS.) It has taken forever for this title to land a legit Stateside digital disc release, and Arrow launches its double-disc edition with hours of extra features, including multiple commentaries, cast and crew interviews, screen tests, behind the scenes segments, alternate opening titles (under its original title *Fall Break*), trailers and TV spots, the feature-length documentary *Fall Breakers: The Story of The Mutilator* and more. I recommend you re-create the greenhouse double feature of *The Mutilator* and *Pieces* (VS 1996) for maximum splatter mayhem. The flick has been on the wish list of slasher fans for years, this excellent release should not be missed.



KUNG FIGHTER

(\$29.95 Blu-ray) 2 1/2

THE CHALLENGE (1982) 2 1/2

D John Frankenheimer Scott Glenn, Toshirô Mifune, Donna Kato, Aino Nakanishi, Clyde Kuznetz 108 mins

Two-bit pugilist Rick Murphy (Glenn), a down-on-his-luck American, is hired by the son of Japanese samurai Tora Yoshida (Mifune) to return an ancient family sword to Japan. Rick is set up, carrying a fake sword, while the real sword is hidden to Yoshida. The Equals, the two swords, were separated four decades previously, and now two brothers fight to acquire them. Tora keeps the old traditions alive, living and training as a samurai, while his brother Hideto (Nakanishi) is a ruthless businessman who has gone so far as killing to obtain the other sword. Rick tries playing both sides of the fence, attempting to deceive Tora to steal the sword for Hideto, but when his deception is discovered, he begins to train with the samurai master. Rick also bonds with a young boy who hopes to train under Tora and falls in love with the samurai's beautiful daughter Akiko (Kato). The climax takes place in a high-tech office building in a meeting fire-for-all kung-fu sword duel that will have action junkies riding the edge of their seats. This action flick, filmed in Japan, has more depth than most, no doubt a contribution of co-screenwriter John Sturges, who wrote some of the most entertaining and thought-provoking B movies of the late '70s and early '80s. This is something of a "lost film," as it hasn't been available since an early '80s VHS release. (It did appear on TV under the title *Sword of the Ninja*, even though the "n" word is never once uttered in the film.) Glenn is wonderful as the "tough American" who thinks his macho bravado is any match for the years of training Yoshida has put his mind and body through. His character has a wonderful ease as he grows to believe in a purpose and wants to transform himself to meet the challenge. Mifune is nothing short of perfect as the samurai, sticking to the time-honored traditions that one still exist in a modern world. **The Challenge** wonderfully juxtaposes old-world Japan embodied by Tora with the more modern Japan represented by "evil" brother Hideto. There is equal parts gorgeous and deadly. (She can also be seen in the freshly restored Arrow Video library of Gordon Fleisher's *Psycho for Death* [VHS 1988], costarring with Burt Reynolds.) This was Frankenheimer's first movie after his late '70s eco-movie flick *The Prophecy*. Foot-pedal, monster and a delight for action fans. **The Challenge** does not disappoint.

HIGHWAY TO HELL (1991) 2 1/2

D Art De Jong Patrick Bergin, Adam Storck, Chad Lowe, Kristy Swanson, Pamela Gidley, C.J. Graham, Richard Farnsworth 94 mins

Young lovers Charlie (Lowe) and Rachel (Swanson) are on a late night drive to Las Vegas to be married without their parents' blessings. Fearing authorities might be on the lookout for them, Charlie takes a dark back road. They stop at a "last chance" gas station, where kindly old attendant Sam (Farnsworth) offers them a place to stay for the night. When the reluctant couple declines, he warns Charlie not to fall asleep between two Joshua trees down the lonely highway. There wouldn't be a moment if Charlie doesn't shout and before he can wake up the young lovers find themselves literally in Hell, with the hellfire Hellcop (Graham) taking Rachel captive to marry her off as one of Satan's brides. In his desperate journey to save his beloved, Charlie meets Bezzle (Bergin), a kindly mechanic, Rayco (Storck), the hell-headed leader of a biker gang, and Clara (Gidley), Sam's old flame who took up with Rayco after she was lost in Hell. Charlie's encounters include a dance of the dead, a construction crew made up entirely of Andy Warhol, a 13-line interstate overrun by VW bugs and monsters such as the giant Chelon (portrayed by the late creature actor Kevin Peter Hall) and the vicious three-headed Cerberus. Charlie soon learns that Bezzle is *Off* Scratch himself, and all is laid on the line in an internal car race between Charlie and Hellcop in the finale. This is one of the best examples of an action/horror comedy ever constrained to the screen. It is tremendously imaginative, even when the budget doesn't allow for the grandeur made the promise suits for. The screen work will wow what they have and deliver a satisfying adventure that one DVD over easily describes as a cross between *Mad Max* and *Army of Darkness*. Steve Johnson contributes some very creative practical effects. The film is peppered with appearances by Lata Ford, Jerry Suller and wife Anne Moon as well as their kids. Bill Suller as an insane short order cook frying eggs on the sidewalk and Amy Suller as Cleopatra, and the amazing soup of the film, Gilbert Gottfried as a crazy-talking Hitler. I had the great joy of first discovering this film in a Hollywood Boulevard theater upon its short lived theatrical release. Extras include director commentary, an interview with Johnson, on image gallery and the original theatrical trailer. Kino Lorber acquires another lost gem from the VHS era, filling a near 25-year gap since its original home-rental release. Many may remember seeing it on the USA Network in the early '90s. An enjoyable, rocking journey to Hell and back!

UP THE CREEK (1980) 2 1/2

D Robert Butler Tim Matheson, Jennifer Runyon, Stephen Furst, Don Moonshaus, Sandy Helberg, Julia Montgomery 96 mins

The worst of Laperouse University's students are recruited by the dean and instructed to wear a prestigious intercollegiate suit (and race in exchange for degrees, or less and get booted out of school permanently). Taking the offer, thirtysomething Bob McGraw (Matheson) heads the team of misfits while drinking, partying and winning the affections of sorority hottie Heather Moon-



weiser (Runyon). This "dicks vs. snobs" plot has our underdogs constantly running ahead of the upper class, for whom the race is fixed for another easy victory. Basically, this was executive producer Sam Arkoff's '80s nodding of his old '60s beach party flicks, just with added bad language, alcohol and nudity. First, oddly, it is almost as innocent as those Frankie and Annette movies in its own way, especially compared to today's gross-out comedies.) **Up the Creek** delivers what it sets out with a rocking soundtrack (title song courtesy of Rockford, Illinois' favorite band, Cheap Trick) and an instantly delectable finale of John Landis proportions. The cast is made up of familiar faces, including Matheson, who was nearly 40 and still playing college slackers (?), and Furst in the "Belushi" role (both costarred in *Animal House*), Moonshaus from the *Porky's* flicks, Runyon from TV's *Charlie in Charge* and the *Christine* author Ta. All a Goodnight, and movie critic Montgomery from *Revenge of the Nerds*. Kino's HD remake is outstanding in the film's official release on disc. There was a previous, movie-only DVD-R from the MGM Limited Edition Collection out a couple of years ago. (It's not been available on home-video proper since its mid-'80s VHS via Vestron Video.) Extras include interviews with Furst, Helberg and casting director Harriet Helberg, the official MTV Cheap Trick "Up the Creek" music video, and the original trailer that really does put all the good stuff into the preview. If you grew up in the '80s, you might enjoy reuniting this dumb but fun teen comedy. If you're a parent of children of an older age, you may want to share this flick with them so they better understand your love of silly sexual innuendo, ridiculous mass destruction and grannies have bodies. Recommended to middle-aged teenage bonobos from all walks of life. **2 1/2**

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEB!

By Debbie Rochon

A number of years ago, let's call it 2002, longtime friend John Russo approached me to be in his then newly passed mentor's specialty-themed script *Escape of the Living Dead: Time Survives* at that time had also agreed to star in the film, and there was much excitement about getting it rolling. Sadly, it was relegated to the Time Out. Russo for scripts that can't find funding, or rather, scripts that can't find such adoptive parents—symbolically. And it was there that the script sat. And sat. John visited it often, would feed it love in the form of (breaking and) never gave up on it, realizing its potential if only there would be an exciting tale from some kind soul with some. That tale goes on and *Survive* would become a Robert Rodriguez love, which is great for him, and get to fulfill his dream of becoming an actor and performing less and less in the SFX end of filmmaking. I would go on to work in indie and even have the pleasure of a few art-house films, along the way counting to Debbie in radio, writing and enjoying some well-written scripts for the first time. I have to say it was not until I was over 40 that some real material came in where I could finally exerting wise. I was never handed



Debbie Rochon joins director John Russo and crew on set for *My Uncle John Is a Zombie* shoot.

any natural skills, so I had to work long and hard at it to get anywhere. I was born with a will of steel and an attitude that anything can be accomplished if you work hard and stick to it. (Yeah, that is my *Rocky* moment.) So between receiving scripts of a higher intelligence level and legend-in-story and character development combined with my skills in working the scripts in quality, I can say that indeed that was my time to really begin creating memorable roles. Not when I was 20 or 25 or even 30. We all have our trajectory and this was mine.

Fast-forward to 2015. John Russo had a script, a zombie comedy this time, called *My Uncle John Is a Zombie*. It was a lot of fun to read. Some of his past efforts I have been cast in have had varying levels of success. *Santa Claus* (1995) was intended as a serious cyber-thriller with sincerely scary scenes in-between the naked dancing to garage music. *Night of the Living Dead 30th Anniversary Edition* (1998) was done to get the copyright back out of public domain via 18 newly shot minutes, but has responded to the release by literally making John himself *Foos*, and *Salo* (2002), since entitled *The Mob Boss* and the *Dead Singer*, was a script built to showcase the truly amazing talents of local Pittsburgh crossover Chuck Corby. It was never officially released other than independently via Amazon.com. So goes it.

My Uncle John Is a Zombie was initially slated to shoot in July/August of 2015. This is a great time to shoot in Pittsburgh. Good weather. Open locations with many people gone on vacation. A good time for wardrobe (no huge jackets or quilts) and even a better time to jasso in a high number of zombie exteriors! That, also, for financial

reasons it was delayed till September. Then October/November. Then December. I didn't think it was going to shoot till Spring 2016 in that point, not many folks want to shoot in Pittsburgh in December. Although there was no snow yet, you really would be pushing your back! But December would in fact be the shooting month for the 95% outdoor-based *MURDER*. We were very lucky that there was a sort of "Indian Summer" happening, it was warmer than usual and it certainly hadn't snowed yet. Indeed, through the viewfinder it looked like fall. One element that wasn't thought of until the filming got underway was the lack of daylight hours. We were shooting in a sort of valley as well, so you didn't have the extra 30 minutes while the sun was rising or falling. There were about four to five true shoot-in hours per day that were double. That's rough for an indie, they require a good 10-14-hour shooting days to make each day viable on a limited budget. But we did what we could, shooting essential scenes and leaving out of the script the non-essential.

There were a lot of really cool cameos in the film, yet another reason I was so thrilled to get on the set, so I could see these longtime friends again. Russ Strasser, who played Johnny in the original *NOTES*, portrayed a revenant in *MURDER*, George Kosman, who reprised his *NOTES* role as Sheriff McMillan, Chuck Corby, who played Stan. John Russo showcased the title character amazingly well—he is truly hilarious as the undead uncle. A writer/narrator named Solon Torgerson is the most intense, slightly perfect dead target for the serial killer Richard Ramirez. If someone doesn't cut him in a film about the serial killer—had Ramirez lived to be in his 50s—it would be a cinematic shame.



Double-shaver Russo displays his undead acting skills in *My Uncle John Is a Zombie*.



Delphine Bachon surveys the *Uncle John* set

We fought against the daylight restrictions and freezing temps, but there were other battles to be addressed. The co-producer and DP Robert Lucas worked hard at trying to bring some of the "classie" John Russo imagery and sensibilities updated and to the table. And once in a while it worked. I have to give Robert a lot of credit because working with a 77-year-old director who is very clear and set in what he likes and wants is a challenging task from the start. Gone are the days when a camera would mostly sit still and actors would enter and exit via frame with small amounts of camera movement. Bill Hanuman, may he rest in peace, had been John's DP for almost all of his movies, now Robert had that duty and his camera moves were for movies of from what John's one and Bill's had been. Another challenge was to get our beloved movie sheriff George Kosove, while he was still in good health. He has been battling some serious heart issues, which have left him on the brink. When the call came in that we should "shoot him to day," I understood that meant we had to drop whatever was on the schedule and get him shot while he was having a good day. They set him behind a table for his scene. He even brought his original **NOTED** shotgun, which made pretty much every Embury and Langolier set scene his or her long johns—understanding George's scene was cut down so he would be able to get through it okay, and he was shot out as soon as possible. He was even able to take a few photos with cast and movie crew. Bless his heart.

John Russo has a big heart and he is without a doubt one of the good guys in this biz. He has always been kind and a man of his word and even more rare, loyal. I know the shoot was tough on him, but he got through it like a trooper. Whether money comes through for his other projects soon and he does make another movie, I don't know. But I am happy I got to visit some older alumni while I had the chance. **W**

Rob Freese's THAT'S BLAXPLOITATION: PAM POWER!

ARROW VIDEO

(\$29.99 2-disc Blu-ray each) 2-16

BLACK MAMA, WHITE MAMA (1973)

D. Eddie Romero: Pam Grier, Margaret Markov, Sol Hogg, Lynn Borden, Zohdy Zohornack, Vic Diaz. 87 mins.

Our story follows female convicts Kate Brent (Markov), a revolutionary, and Luc Daniels (Grier), a prostitute, on the run after escaping from a brutal Filipino women's prison. Shuttled together in a Sydney Foster and Tony Curtis in **The Defiant Ones**, the gals try to stay one step ahead of crazed bounty hunter Ruben (Hogg) and greasy pimp Vic Cheng (the always reliable Filipino powerhouse Diaz). The gals take time to savor the quiet moments in their flight to freedom, eventually building a mutual respect for each other. Based on a story by Joe Viola and Jonathan Demme, this is a serviceable action flick that has all the right spots as a potboiler to ward us shunning, shoot-'em-up fans. Romero keeps the film moving at a fast clip with just enough drama to be concerning without becoming mean-spirited. Profitized by the great John Ashley, who also co-owned drive-in movie theaters that no doubt played his films all summer long, it was released through AIP. Extras include new interviews with Markov and Hogg, an archival interview with Romero, technical notes, still gallery, and running commentary with filmmaker and Filipino film historian Andrew Lawford. Don't fun this flick's worth a look for both Greenback and fans of Filipino exploitation action flicks.

SHERA, BABY (1975) **B** **W**

D. William Grier: Pam Grier, Arliss Stoker, DuViville Martin, Rudy Challenger, Christopher Joy, Dick Merrillfield. 90 mins.

Discomomus Andy Shayne (Challenger) is beaten by thugs attempting to take over his loan company. His right-hand man Brock Williams (Stoker) calls Shayne's daughter Shera (Grier), a private detective, who leaves Chicago for her hometown of Louisville, Kentucky to help kick some shins into the gutter. Shera jacks some jaws and puts the heat on kerdile scum Pilot (Martin), who in turn leads her to Shank (Merrillfield), the white crime lord in charge of the Louisville underground of gangsters and dirty dealings. This is an enjoyable but light actioner with none of a focus on characters that bloody anyone. It doesn't pack the punch of **Foxy Brown** or **Catty** (VS #21) but still would work on its own merits. Grier seems to be having fun, going undercover to infiltrate Shank's crime sys-



**Black
Mama,
White
Mama**

tem while managing another fabulous costume change from one scene to the next. (Seriously, in what amounts to one day in the film, she seems to change clothes three or four times!) The always dependable Martin owns his scenes, especially when he's bawling his disowned thugs (He comes across as the Martin Day of Blaxploitation.) Grier Stoker is instantly likable, although he isn't given much to do once Grier makes the scene. (He is most famous for his lead in John Carpenter's **Assault on Precinct 13**, easily his best role.) Director Grier hailed from Louisville, KY and filmed a number of his movies there. He was a very popular exploitation director, having his stride with the **Jaws** rip-off **Grizzly** (VS #79) and delivering solid flicks like **Day of the Animals** (VS #66), **Zebra Killer** and **The Monster** (VS #63), among others. Sadly, he died in a helicopter accident at age 30 while scouting locations for his next film. It was a blow to exploitation cinema to lose him so young. Just imagining the films he would have made throughout the '80s and '90s boggles the mind. Extras include an interview with screenwriter David Sheldon, a look at Pam Grier's years with AIP courtesy of Chris Poggiali, trailers, still gallery and multiple audio commentaries. Don't let the PG rating fool you—this is PG from 40-years ago, which is much edgier and violent than today's hip-to-lead, smutty-and-sunshine-friendly PG. Fans of Grier, Grier, Stoker and Martin should not hesitate to scope it out. **W**



**Pam
Grier
is
Shera,
Baby**

THE TRUTH FROM THE BOOTH: CONFESSIONS OF A FILM PROJECTIONIST!

By Tim Ferrante

When did I become a projectionist? I mean, really become one? It was the night at Keanzberg, NJ's Colonial Theatre when a small electrical junction box in between the projectors started to smoke. A cautious person would have shut off the equipment, killed the power and stood by with a fire extinguisher. Instead, I assessed the situation and let the movie play. The wiring was live, overheating and obviously starting to burn, but everything was still running. Some one for my side. Trying to fix the problem with out stopping the show was definitely the wrong thing to do, though. But once I got that waxy thought out of my head, I looked for a sawtooth or...

Long before that defining moment, another had occurred when I was five. It was during my first theatrical movie experience (*100 Dalmatians* [1961] when I saw the flickering light rays orbiting. So bright, shining through one of the tiny windows of a room near the ceiling. How did they make pictures on the screen? Oh, wow. The light moved. It's coming from a different tiny window now? Mind blown. None to self. Got to the bottom of all this. And I would. Fourteen years later.

In August 1974 my friend Steve Phillips made a seemingly insignificant decision. He was leaving his head office assistant manager position at the Plaza Theatre in nearby Harlem, NJ. Knowing how badly I wanted to work there, he said he'd put in a good word. He did and I got the job. *At last*, I'm getting to the bottom of all this! The Plaza was where I got my first real look at 35mm projectors, film, reels and all of the wonders a projection booth had to offer. I'd hardly been inside one before, having relied on peeks through an open projectionist's door at the drive in and scenes in movies like *The Blob* (1958) and *The Tingler* (1959).

The lucky few who threaded film and trimmed carbon arc lamps were promoted by IATSE, the abbreviation of a union whose entire name takes a full 10 seconds to clearly recall. Here, you sit. International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, Its Territories and Canada. It's a fiercely unionized organization whose



To Project and Serve Tim Ferrante prepares to show 1979's *The In-Laws* at Keanzberg's Colonial.

slogan should be: "You have a better chance of surviving a firing squad than becoming an IATSE member." Nevertheless, I expressed my interest to Tom Hart, the Plaza's young projectionist. But he had little power to help other than let me watch him work. His father was an IATSE member, so he was already acclimated. I felt. My unlikely cheerleader? Lillian Flynn, the theatre's manager. We let it off right away and I couldn't do enough for her or the theatre. Best of all? Her husband Archie was the business agent for the IATSE Local chapter. The business agent is responsible for staffing booths (I and assembling stagehand crews (the Local had contracts with two live performance venues). Lillian convinced him to give me a shot.

I was more valuable to Archie as a stagehand while working at the Plaza. It wasn't until 1976 that I was sent to a booth to formally learn projection. And where was I sent? To the, tumble-down Colonial Theatre. Situated amid the rides, games and eateries of Keanzberg Amusement Park, it originally opened as the Casino decades before. Now the old leaked from the projector booth, the sound system was horrible and the auditorium—this is not an exaggeration—smelled exactly like a dumpster. About a quarter of the seats had no seats! Only the wooden hacks were intact. The seats routinely broke off and no one cared enough to replace them. Patrons would enter the dark theatre, attempt to sit, moss-land on the sticky concrete floor and spill whatever they were carrying all over themselves. Oh yes, it was a very different era.

The Colonial's projectionist was Val Strub. He was described to be a bit of a loner, a perfect fit in its no-music booth where anything could

happen. Val saw the positive side of the leaking projector booth (the gear-driven top portion prior to the film reaching the sound head below it). He reasoned that the leaking oil always kept a fresh batch inside the head as we had to top it off so often. He was right, and the only guy who believed leaking oil was a good thing (those heads still leaked right up to the day the theatre closed). As far as the Local was concerned, if this place didn't scare you off, then you must really want to be in the business.

In equipment was representative of a dying form of projection. Two projectors with 2000-ft reel capacity and carbon arcs as the light source. This type of lamp uses a pair of carbon rods that are sheathed in copper. When electrified and tapped together, the rods burn white hot, the copper melts and drops into a pan below while a fan sucks the fumes and ash from above as the rods slowly disintegrate. They required constant tinkering, not touching and replacement. Every 15-17 minutes there would be a changeover to the opposite projector that was loaded with the next reel. All night long it was a back-and-forth changing of reels from projector to projector. Picnics, light and sound. While there were a few similar booths in the Local, most had been upgraded to xenon lamps, high capacity reels or automated platter systems. To master the craft in this situation meant you could likely run anything, anywhere, anytime. I learned for several nights, getting to know the dia of the machines and taking notes as simple as what drawer had the pair of scissors to important details like what frame of the film leader to put into the film gate for changeover. No two booths were alike and keeping a notebook for each was crucial.

I didn't know that Val wanted to retire. The Local put the booth up for girls among its members, with the most senior getting first refusal. But this was the wrecked Colonial. The pay was \$5 an hour, which was the lowest minimum the union would agree to with any theatre. Considering the national minimum was \$2.40 at the time, \$5 wasn't so bad. No one wanted the Colonial, so Val's son Doug reluctantly took the job. Since he needed a night off each week and not even one member wanted to go there and pick up a few extra dollars, that left young me. I was offered the plaza position to be Doug's "third projectionist." It was this booth where I first ran a movie solo, the title of which would have been sewed in a diary had I kept one.

Meanwhile, I was out learning other booths. From the Colonial's neck to the high-tech storefronts of United Artists Theatres, General Cinema and Minor Miskers Theatres with plaster cynosures where the film ran in its entirety. All you did was thread it at the beginning and then go watch the portable TV you brought along. Booths with large capacity reels would hold three of the 2000-ft. size, which typically required only one or two changeovers, depending upon the length of the feature. And most times they were automated and I learned multiple booths—one projectionist, three screens. A twin theatre as our Local had a British import automation system that involved an electronic pagewood. The projectionist was Jerry Spencer, a fellow with a Southern drawl and pragmatic view of the world. He gave me a tutorial on this jockey system, constantly interjecting that I'd probably never have to peg and program this thing because only a handful of guys really understood how. Sounded good to me, so I craved that nighttime off my "To Letter" list. But it was Jerry who told me that dedicated and reliable projectionists are available to work 365 days a year and on short notice. He said, "Always remember there are no holidays in show business. The show must go on." Show business? That's what this is? I wanted until I got down stairs to laugh. By the time I reached the car, I still wasn't laughing. He was right. The show must go on—a sacrosanct commitment of those who work in the entertainment industry regardless of what kind of show it may be. I'd never thought of it that way. That sneaky son of a bitch—he got inside my head!

Doug didn't last long. He hated the Colonial. It was Radio City Music Hall to me. Doug had announced his departing date when the business agent called and said, "Toss the booth as you see it want it," which translated to *No one else wants it, never will and you're the only asshole we know who does*. So at the age of 21, I became the (de)aling head projectionist for one of the (dis)best, most reviled theatres in the Local. I didn't care. It was a sh[ri]t-hole, but it was my

sh[ri]t-hole. I hung posters and stuff and sound-track album covers. I relabeled everything, cleaned and painted. Mine!

When movies changed from week to week, we had to prepare and inspect the 35mm prints(s) delivered by the distributor. Since the Colonial was a second- and third-run house, the prints were always tied to opposed to first-run houses that typically got pristine prints fresh out of the lab. Since I was the guy minding it for the next week or two, I had to be sure it would go so trouble-free. The ones I'd prepare always had issues. When splices needed to be remade, I had to use a cement splice, not the more prevalent galleon-tape splices that made the work faster and easier. I'd do this inspection work on my own time as prints were delivered the opening day of a run. I couldn't tell the union I was doing this, but I'd be damned if I was going to arrive at my appointed hour and run a used print cold! That's asking for it, so I'd go in during the afternoon and ready it for that night's engagement.

It's amusing to me that anyone would do the following, but someone did and I was its beneficiary. We had booked *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) after it played on its first-run dates. I came in early, put the first reel onto the rotund bench and started inspecting, working the film onto our house reels and leaving the strip between my thumb and middle finger. The index finger presses over the center of the strip, so if anything odd passes through, you'd feel it. When I got to the last two reels, I started feeling upper after upper after upper. Some I could leave alone, others I had to remake. That there were just way too many splices too close together for my liking. What had happened to this thing? I called the theatre's on-air guy saying we had gotten a really bad print and would need a replacement ASAP. It was too late for that night's showing, but it would be swapped out the following day.

The one and only time I was ever given the finger by a person in the audience was that night. *Clarity-clarity-clarity-clarity*, the splices were coming one after another. Those last two reels were a mess and contained, of course, the final act of the movie when the UFO Membership makes its spectacular appearance. Except there was no Membership? All of those splices? Someone had removed every single frame where it was in view? No way would I run this print again for the second show. The manager had guessed that already and was turning people away.

The credits started to roll and I could tell from the body language of the audience that they were pissed. I was about to bring up the house lights full when I saw a patron looking up at the booth. He spotted me and flipped a one finger salute. Could I blame him? No, but I wasn't deserving of that! I held for the stairs, determined to act this wisecracking straight.

I found him, just walking out of his aisle. I was about to mouth off when I recognized him! His



name was Neil, a high school friend who I hadn't seen for a few years. He didn't realize I was the projectionist, thinking instead I was there for the movie and we just happened to bump into each other. "Neil, you just gave me the finger and I came down here to bust your ass?" I was damn lucky that it was him and not a stranger. My career would have ended on that spot.

The only other time I worried about a print's condition was Rene Cardon's *Santa Claus* (1968). These were the waning days of separate Saturday and Sunday bookings for a holiday romance. *Santa Claus* is a dubbed Mexican production and was in its 18th year of circulation by the time I had a chance to run it. Paramount had picked up the distribution rights a few years earlier from K. Gordon Murray, the renowned distributor of children's film fare. It was presented as a part of the Paramount Family Mature Series, an ongoing supply of G-rated movies that launched in the fall of 1974 with *My Side of the Mountain* (1969). When the print arrived at the Colonial was now archived. Nope. It was an original K. Gordon Murray print from 1969. The film stock was in Ektachrome color, which was notorious for "fading" over time. The cyan and yellow dye layers would fade and leave behind a red stage. This print looked terrible! The stock itself was so brittle as a potato chip. It had earned its keep many years ago, yet here it was in my hands waiting to delight a family filled audience anew. I predicted several film breaks, plenty of complaints and refused demands. Instead, the crapped print ran perfectly and a holiday happy crowd sat through the scratchy red movie as if it were Technicolor.

I enjoyed the characters in our Local, the guys who fiction writers struggle to imagine. There was a duplex in Fairhold, NJ whose projectionist was Al Santokus. He either liked Al or he didn't. Conversely, you either liked Al or you didn't! I loved him. Bizarre, moody and one of the funniest people I'd ever met. Al was unique and very good at his job. He also had an unusual view of the world. For example, it was because fellow projectionist Hal Mark was ill-fitting trousers with cuffs riding so high above the ankle that Al described him as looking like "a lost slave of Jesus." I still have no idea what that means, but it made sense to Al. There was a period when I was his relief projectionist. He lent me with his three-screen booth equipped with automated large reel and plaster projection format. The largest theatre had a throwback waterfall style curtain. It was a treat to open and close. The booth was relatively easy to operate except for Al taking off Thursday nights. Why? That was a night when there was real work to do. The prints had to be broken down and shipped out! I had to splice the head and tail leaders back onto every reel and wind them onto the reels on which they were sent. And depending on the engagements I might back out and all three features would suck around another week. Or some—or all!—were leaving that week. Yeah, Al liked me all right.

Several years later I read a letter in *Wired N.J.* magazine, written by a fellow who was one of the last projectionists at that Fairhold duplex. He told of his many nights in the booth when he couldn't help feeling as though someone was watching him work. He said it had a spirit presence and he wasn't imagining it. The manager told him that a projectionist died three years before and still haunted it. His letter was perfect *Wired N.J.* fodder. He was, in fact, talking about Al. And one night he didn't come home. His

worn-out wife altered police, who found Al's real parking truck still parked in the lot. He'd stayed late and died of a heart attack. So I wrote my own letter telling the editors about the ghost, what he was like and if there's anyone who could defy God or the Devil and stay behind in his booth, it was Al. The letter went unpublished, presumably so the unexplained remained that way.

Speaking of the Devil, The Exorcist II: The Heretic (1977) presented another first. I was working at the Towneplex in Middletown, NJ, which had a noon to midnight weekend schedule. Tom Stierfield was its manager. He was a guy who could behave very professionally when needed and adopt a bit of a British accent to sell it. If you were alone with him, he'd crack jokes and be his fun self. **The Exorcist II** was dying, universally panned and drawing crowds of 10 people. Tom came into the booth and loaded me a box. "Here, it's the new ending to **Exorcist II**. Once this show is over, take the last reel off and put the one on." Really, a new ending? The movie was awful! Nothing could save it. The only good thing about it was that the new reel was shorter than the one running. Patrons would suffer less.

There were also moments when movies stuffed you to death. I'd work in other booths whenever I had the chance, so I might see the same movie in different locations all day, and night. I must have shown **Saturday Night Fever** (1977) 200 times or more. **Reeky 81** (1979) I'd see played over 22 weeks in our place. **Animal House** became a vintage whopper hit the summer of 1978 and was still running three months after it opened. When I didn't mind were the multiple weeks of **Saturday** midnight showings of **Dawn of the Dead** (1978) and lengthy stays of other horror or sci-fi hits. When I did mind was falling in for a 12-hour shift at the Strand Theatre in Keyport, NJ, the very place where I'd seen **2001: A Space Odyssey** in a child. The Strand had become a triple-A groundhouse. I'd spent countless Saturdays in there during the 60s, making kiddie movie memories that I didn't want soiled. But the pay was good, so I accepted a one-time shift. By the second hour I was on the phone to the agency business agent, feigning a sudden illness and begging him to find a replacement and get me out of there as fast as possible. I never set foot in the Strand again.

When a projectionist observes and does—sorry—what a projectionist observed and did is a profession that's gone the way of soda jerks and lamp-lighters. Yes, there are still working projectionists, typically found in festival or specialty venues showing 35mm film presentations, such as Film Forum in New York City, Tarratino's New Beverly Cinema in Los Angeles or the Adams Drafthouse chain. The rest have consorted to high definition digital projection which eliminates a long list of costs in all areas of production and distribution. Ironically, I prefer digital to film. Big, bright, sharp and no splices! I used to



The Real Deal: Tom Ferraro at ABC Television.

fantasize about my retirement years, including a pleasant return to one of my old projection booths. Perhaps work a few nights a week and coast full circle before permanently dimming the lights on an earlier career. I never dreamed that it would happen because 35mm film would become obsolete!

Today, nearly all of the theatres where I spent many night hours are either demolished or converted into other uses. I'd left the Colonial in 1980 and went to work—in a projectionist—for ABC Television in New York. It was converted into a large music site one week before being razed many years ago and replaced with condos. I still take an occasional drive by the property, pointing the small booth with all my stuff on its walls. It was one of the happiest places I've ever known. Except that night when the small electric junction box started to smoke. The night when I became a real projectionist.

Jerry Spencer's influence was working—the show must go on! Having already made the decision to leave the projectionist's room for as long as they could, I fished a screwdriver and removed the junction box cover plate. The wiring was old, as shown by its decaying cloth insulation. The smoke was emanating from a pair of wires with a ceramic twist-on connector. Resistance? The wires were on arcing thanks to a deteriorating connection. When current doesn't flow freely, resistance builds and creates heat. I didn't have gloves, but I did have a couple of papers. Holding the wires by the insulation with one pair, I removed the ceramic cap with my other hand. Fortunately, one set of pliers held rubber-coated grips. I used those to twist the wires together even more. Then I rubbed the resistance and stopped the overheating. I found some electrical tape in a drawer and did a canopy wrap around the exposed ends. I'd worry about a permanent repair after we closed.

The show must go on. And it did. ☿



DIGITAL DEBUTS

ARROW VIDEO

(559)993 Disc (Blu-ray + DVD) 4/16

BRIDE OF RE-ANIMATOR (1989)

정영일/김지

D Brian Yuzna Jeffrey Combs, Bruce Abbott, Fabiana Udeno, Kathleen Kamont. David Gale. Miley Shelton 96 mins

Deranged Dr. Herbert West (Combs), the protagonist of H.P. Lovecraft's *Herbert West, Re-Animator*, returns in this hysterically ensouled, gross and sometimes scary sequel to 1985's equally insane (but fun) *Re-Animator* (VS 345). Miserably co-dependent film assistant Dr. Dan Cain (Abbott) is back as well—one has to wonder why Cain doesn't simply walk away from his mad doctor buddy! In this making, the boys are continuing their experiments in re-animating the dead. They've returned to the USA after working as monkeys in the middle of a Premontion civil war, where Cain met gorgeous Francesca (Udeno), those potential lovebirds are reunited in Arkham, Massachusetts, where the experiments get absurdly out of hand yet again. *Re-Animator* fans will no doubt love West and Cain's creepy old home, which borders on an even creepier cemetery. Combs and Abbott are superb actors—will someone please explain to me why Combs isn't an A-list horror star in the *Precinct* Casting/Lee mold? Both actors have a unique ability to work at their audience. They play *Bride's* campy dialogue with tongue planted firmly in cheek, they could easily have played these same lines as witless, with a "deadly" seriousness. Also back is the brilliant Gale as the still-disembodied head of Dr. Carl Hill. Seriously, Gale should have gotten an Oscar nomination for his deliciously macabre performance: "Are we having fun yet?" he screams as he flies around the lab cemetery of a pair of bat wings attached to his ears by Dr. West. Shelton fills in for Barbara Crampton, who played Cain's love Meg in the first film—Crampton chose not to appear in what is now a diminished role. Meg is among the re-animated dead, but just because she's a walking, decomposing corpse doesn't stop Cain from embracing her. The cramer film gets the more fun it is to watch! Extras include the theatrical trailer, a deleted scene (which is presented as behind-the-scenes footage) and an interview with Yuzna, who, among other things, reveals *Bride's* original concept: West is the basement of the White House re-animating JFK. Now that's a film worth like to see!

—David-Elijah Nahmod

THE PREMONTION (1995) 정영일

D Robert Schuster Sharon Farrell, Edward Bell, Ellen Barber, Richard Lynch, Chae Nae-gy, Danielle Brinscoe 94 mins

Released from a psychiatric institute after five years, Barber is obsessed with finding the daughter she was forced to give up to adoption. She connects with carnival clown Lynch, whom she met while institutionalized. He has found the child (Brinscoe), adopted as an infant by Farrell and Bell. Barber and Lynch plan to kidnap the little girl, but she and Farrell are having psychic flashes of danger. Meanwhile, physician husband Bell has a new colleague (Nae-gy) whose field of research is parapsychics, and her specialization in all things psychic will have an important part to play. Given the setup, I thought that I had a fairly good idea where the film was heading. I could not have been more wrong. Once the kidnapping attempt begins, the plot veers off in unexpected, very interesting, and often chilling directions. The main concept of Richard Lynch as a clown is, of course, decidedly insane and is played for as disturbing potential here, but not as a flat, cartoonish way. Historian Stephen Theover, in his excellent introduction to the disc, emphasizes the film's compassion for its characters, and he's absolutely correct. These are all human beings, flawed in various ways, and we understand why they do what they do, even as some of them venture into very dark territory. The special effects are minimal, for the most part rarely going beyond what would have been available to Georges Méliès, but handled with such skill that they're genuinely effective. The same goes for the sound design—director/writer Schuster doesn't have the budget of *The Exorcist* to work with, but demonstrates how effective the right kind of howl from the right actor, can at just the right moment, can be. *The Premontion* is not without its rough edges, but even they work to enhance its raw, honest, gritty power. Arrow's disc includes a commentary track, interviews with Schuster and the late Lynch, and more. This is a truly slice of thoughtful, low-budget '70s horror, well worth rediscovering.

—David Annandale

COMEN MEDIA

(539)98 Blu ray 5/16

A MARRIED WOMAN (1964) 정영일/정영일

D Jean Luc Godard Bernard Noël, Masha Merrill, Philippe Leroy, Roger Leenhardt, Rols Madlen 94 mins

Director/writer Godard evails the possibilities of black and white cinematography, soundly and artistically posing the perpetually unexamined but very conventionally married and frequently half-naked Charlotte (Merril) composed or entwined with the restless bodies of his passionate lover/lover Robert (Noël) and more practical, suspicious, handsome pilot husband Pierre (Leroy), who had recently hired a private detec-



tive to uncover a past affair. Should she stay or should she go? Charlotte can't make up her mind and, as the drifts further between the two, Godard, aided by his own ominous, probing voice-over, voices upon the situation and the bedroom to simultaneously explore the boundaries of a then-new, emerging sexual identity for women, revel in a particularly French obsession with philosophical and moral precepts, and, with an endless stream of ordinary activities filmed as what we take for granted now as aesthetic discourse, highlight, in a very pioneering way, the suspense an everyday life. The philosophizing envelops the film like a cocoon. He prepared, as fingers crawl over stomachs, for the passing of the morning of memory in present and the horizon of World War II in particular (something of a *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* Lite). In this film, Godard is the undisputed master of dispassionate action, so we have characters wandering all around Pierre's hotel plane with compelling competing, often unconnected conversations as Godard's great star, the estimable Roger Leenhardt—filmmaker and scholar who helped elevate cinema to an art, and Nouvelle Vague master and guru—talks about having recently returned from Auschwitz, while personally shrewd Charlotte, personifying the younger generation, doesn't seem to know or care. Charlotte's mood *Modernity's* (Merril) provides a lot of what was intended to stifle as empty sex talk, while Charlotte's gynecologist mouth a lot of nonsense to her idiotic questions about the influence of the emotion of love and the potency of her unborn child, which goes a long way in explaining why this film, once so much praised, is sometimes eternal, sometimes dated. But the moose look and mood is never out of style and, though his film is in search of an ending, Godard made a gem that transcends a natural end.

—Nancy Naglin

FILM CHEST

(\$37.98 DVD) 4/16

BLOODY WEDNESDAY (1985) 3/5
D Mark G. Collins. Raymond Huntford, Pamela Baker, Norman Perry, Jeff C. Hagan. 89 mins.

Virtually unseen since its initial appearance on Prison VHS, this offbeat oddity—"based on a true story" and with a twisted script by former moviebook screenwriter Philip (Johnny Gaskin) Yenkin, who later specialized in bizarre B titles—tells of chaotic screw-up Harry (Huntford), who, after losing his job, hides up in an empty L.A. hotel owned by a client of his concerned older brother (Perry). Here, Harry nervously at an awkward pace, enjoying the warped, pulpy fantasy life of a man who's watched way too many B flicks. He coexists with his put-tidly-bare (voiced by the late little person actor Billy Curtis, of *Terror at Tiny Town* and *High Plains Drifter* here), befriended a bookish imaginary boyfriend (sort of a precursor of *Barton Fink*'s Chet [Steve Buscemi]), and crosses paths with a violent street hood (veteran villainess Ofelia), who turns out to be all too real. *Bloody Wednesday* may not be up there with such apocalyptic classics as *Polemi's The Tenant* or Kubrick's *The Shining* (from which this pic literally lifts), but it displays as much clever witlessness. Only the cheap, if inevitable, slaughter climax detracts from its mood of sustained terror.

KINO LORER FILMS

(\$29.95 Blu-ray) 4/16

THE FILE OF THE GOLDEN GOOSE (1969) 3/5

D Sam Wanamaker. Yul Brynner, Charles Gray, Edmund Woodward, John Harrie, Adrienne Cori, Grahame Crowden, Walter Godt. 105 mins.

Actor-turned-director Wanamaker's uncredited remake of Anthony Mann's 1947 *T-Men* (VS #21), transplants co-writer John C. (The Black Sheep) Higgins' original tale from post-war America's black-and-white noir world (photographed by shadow specialist John Alton) to a color-drenched 1960s England. A chrome-domed Brynner, loosely reprising his *Magnificent Seven* Chao character in an updated setting, takes the titular role originally inhabited by Dennis O'Keefe while future *Equalizer* The Wicker Man Woodward plays his partner undercover agent, from the U.S. Treasury Dept. and Scotland Yard, respectively, who infiltrate a wildly lucrative and merciless international funny-money gang in place of *T-Men*'s eccentric go-between The Schmeiser (Wallace Ford). Guy (The Rocky Horror Picture Show) portrays flamboyant criminal connection The Owl, a retro gay character, sort of an actual Sydney Greenstreet, who supplies File with some of its slyer clues. Anita Poverly-fronted Springing YGs shock value:

Aside from a few conspicuous James Bondian flashbacks, File bows fairly closely to Higgins' (planning a winter's credit here with frequent Edna and L. Calhoun collaborator Robert E. Kent, under the alias James B. Gordon) first film (The basic story was also re-staged, however uncredited, as a version, 1965's

Armata Raiders, with André Murphy and Ben Cooper as the undercover heroes.) Horror star Cori (Madhouse, Vampire Circus) adds a touch of slinky glamour to the otherwise gay-dominated proceedings. While File suffers from an absence of star elements and a surfeit of clichés, the film delivers the straight-faced action goods in fairly entertaining fashion.

OLIVE FILMS

(\$29.95 Blu-ray) 4/16, 3/16

DEAD PIGEON ON BETHHOVEN STREET (1972) 3/5

D Stuart Poller. Glenn Corbett, Christa Lang, Seymour Stupp, Anton Diffring, Alex D'Arcy, Stephen Audran. 127 mins.

Filmed as a feature-length episode for the long-running German police procedural TV series *Tatort* (Crane School), *Dead Pigeon* finds ex-pat American cult auteur Poller going the Godardian deconstruction route (a clip d'essai Jean-Luc's 1965 meta-masterwork *Alphaville* even sneaks into the proceedings). Poller's dense detective hero Sandy (Corbett, star of the director's 1989 cop movie *The Criminal Minded*) is very much in the same mold as Lemmy Caution (Eddie Constantine), the hard-boiled B movie shamus Godard appropriated for *Alphaville*. An off-chicken Sandy gets embroiled in an increasingly convoluted murder case involving lovely Christa (Poller's then-wife Lang) and a procession of red herrings, double-crosses and misapprises. Unfortunately, at 127 minutes, Poller's game goes eventually wears out in welcome, despite its frequent clever touches, deft dialogue and Euro-style film referencing (in addition to *Alphaville*, *Rio Bravo*, *The Bridge on the River Kwai* and even Frank Zappa's 200 Motels all recur motifs). Usually held on home material Olive includes an interesting documentary, *Return to Bethoven Street: Sam Poller in Germany*, featuring Lang, Wim Wenders and other Poller fans, along with an essay by *The Films of Samuel Poller* author Lisa Dombrowski, and the original trailer. Casual buffs would be better off with Poller classics like *The Steel Helmet*, *Shock Corridor* and *The Naked Kim* (both VS #78), but complaints will vent to visit *Bethoven Street*.

KILL ME AGAIN (1986) 3/5

D John Dahl. Jenette Goldstein, Yul Brynner, Michael Madsen, Pat Mullen, Riki D'Amico. 94 mins.

Not to be confused with 2007's *You Kill Me* (VS #67), anti-viable cult auteur Dahl's *The Last Seduction*, *Red Rock West* (so far) final feature film (so far) before his shift to episodic TV dancing,



Dahl's theatrical debut stars then real-life husband and wife Kilmner and Whitley Kilmner as a down-and-out private dick and bumbro femme fatale, respectively, in a starchy, twisty mystery. After Rome and low-life partner Madsen rip off a mob courier for nearly a nod in hot beds, Rome splits with the host, her jilted boss in violent pursuit. On anti-homosexual snafus flash her way to Rome, where she lures a financially strapped Yul to help her stage her own bogus murder. That's only the beginning of the complication in a deliberately paced but consistently absorbing tale, scripted by Dahl and co-writer David W. Warfield, that takes excellent visual advantage of the dusty glitter and surrounding expense of an authentic Southwestern locale, looking more vivid than ever in Olive's new Blu-ray edition.

KINJITE: FORBIDDEN SUBJECTS (1989) 3/5

D J. Lee Thompson. Charles Bronson, Juan Fernandez, Perry Lopez, Peggy Lopez, James Pax, Bill McKinney. 97 mins.

Kinjite may be an unlikely mess, but at least it's a compelling one. The flick's convolving plot lines follow profish LAPD dick and helicopter doll Chuck (in an unusually tatty turn) as he overprotects his own teen daughter (Lopez) while trying to nail notorious sadist pimp Fernandez (who makes Harvey Keitel's *Taxi Driver* precursor look downright wholesome). Eagerly repressed Japanese businessman Pax, meanwhile, finds his fate inextricably bound with Hammer's when his own young daughter's snatched. Until the formulae final act, *Kinjite* offers a fairly kinky, unpredictable mix of stress, suspense and cross-cultural confusion, leavened with occasional laughs (as when Chuck, in his big cowboy moment, authorizes a garbled meat riot at the expense of a crowd of understandably bewildered Japanese visitors). Cheers to Olive for digging out this Canton chestnut for a fresh Blu-ray edition.

—The Phantom

SEVERIN FILMS/

SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO

(524.952-000 Blu-ray, \$19.95 DVD) 3.66

THAT'S SEXPLOITATION! (2012) Color
B&W 98 min

D. Frank Henenlotter, 136 mins

With your informed, genial host filmmaker Frank Henenlotter, erudite tour guide the late, great David F. Friedman (aka The Mighty Monarch of Exploitation)—and SWV's extensive, grade-one film library, *That's Sexploitation!* offers a definitive, mega fun look at the history of nasty cinema from silent stages to the proto-hardcore "white-noise" screen sex manuals of the late '60s/early '70s. In between we see recent samples of arcade loops, naked native-girl profiles "poona-poona" slither 'n' slither, stomach-turning (to speak only of stomachs) VD educational shorts, burlesque movies with buggy puns, comics and exotic dances like Rosita Reilly and Her Clothes Stealing Doves, and groovy nudie-camp romps from Dean Cain and computers. Also represented are con-fused indie entries from the Friedman/BG Lewis combine and trencher Ross (The Inhuman Mr. Toshi Meyer "Woman rumped around in various stages of undress," Henenlotter points out, "while never stared and made funny faces and never touched them. It's like we're watching two alien races what about each other without ever once connecting"), sadistic roughies, psychedelic dope grocers and other exploitation fare. Henenlotter further illuminates the trope by comparing rare "hot" (scantly clad) and "cool" (jovely clad) versions of the same scenes shot for films like *Escort Girls* to adjust to varying taste censorship laws and supplies numerous other little-known nuggets. (We never knew, for instance, that *Detour* auteur Edgar G. Ulmer directed 1980's *Naked Venus* under a cinematic alias) Withal, *That's Sexploitation!* reps a veritable soft-core pornography that, even at an abundant 136 minutes, will leave you yearning for more. We were disappointed to learn, though, that *Olga's Garden of Boudage* ("See Beautiful Young Girls...trained to Be Human Horses") shall remain a filmic promise forever unfulfilled. Extras include a terrific commentary by Henenlotter and SWV's Linda Peirce scoring with fascinating backstories about Dave Friedman, late, great SWV founder Mike Vraney, the film's dramatic rescue from impending oblivion, plus over 30 hours of rare exotic loops and shorts.

—The Phantom

SHOUT! FACTORY

(525.09 Blu-ray) 3.16

YOU'LL LIKE MY MOTHER (1972)

88 min

D. LaMont Johnson. Patty Duke, Rosemary Murphy, Richard Thomas, Sam Bottoms. Allen, 92 mins

In the tradition of such harrowing Holocaust captive dramas as *Def! Def! My Darling!* and *Scream of Fear* (VS #69) comes this underseverely obscure early getting pregnant young solitary widow Duke against her maternal mother-in-law (Murphy) while trapped in a remote mansion during a Minnesota blizzard. Following her Occupation juvenile turn in *The Miracle Worker*, her adolescent sitcom star playing identical conans (!) ("You will love your son," you'll recall, "when comes are two of a kind") on the spongy *The Patty Duke Show* and her 1965 teen female-empowerment peep in *Bible* (now the topic of an entire book available via Ben/Honor Mido), Patty amply demonstrates her adult genre acting skills as the convincingly feisty off Murphy's mad machinations and attempts to protect her endangered new born daughter with the help of her mentally challenged, physically abused young sister-in-law (Allen, who earned a Golden Globe nom for her named portrayal). As if Murphy doesn't offer obstacles enough, there may be another ominous presence in the house with an even more sinister agenda. Barely seen during its 1972 featured run and easily confused (by years truly at least) with debating big-screen director Darren McGavin's similar-sounding thriller *Happy Mother's Day*, Love George, released scant months later, *You'll Like My Mother*, adapted by Jo (The Gun Hawk) Hickox from Nancy A. Hackett's novel and successfully assisted by TV vet Johnson, arrives as a welcome surprise that lays the nerves out as it probes the emotional envelope. Murphy more than holds up her end of the woman-a-woman deal, projecting both calculating meanness and age-related vulnerability as the dastard schemer while avoiding the over-the-top chops favored by *Def! Def! My Darling's* Tallulah Bankhead in her memorable filmic farewell, while Thomas, future *The Waltons'* John-Boy, surfaces as a far different type of character here, and Robert Redford look-alike Dennis Hopper appears as a necessary woman. Stuart Facker's sharp B&W includes new in-depth interviews with theps Thomas and Allen that further explicate the film's genesis and fate, a photo gallery, and the original trailer.

—The Phantom

VCI ENTERTAINMENT

(524.95 Blu-ray) 3.16

THE CITY OF THE DEAD (1960)B&W

88 min

D. John Murray. Christopher Lee, Vanessa Stevenson, Beta St. John, Pamela Jessel, Deane Latta, 78 mins

The 1960 cut for late *Horror* B&W has varicose to numerous public-domain editions, of widely varying quality, since the dawn of the VHS era, but VCI presents the definitive version with its superlative new Blu-ray. Not only has



VCI restored the film's original title, *The City of the Dead*, but offers the 78-minute British cut, two minutes longer than the Stateside release. Director Murray and writer George (Circus of Horrors) Burt's spare but harrowing score tale, boasting an eerie vibe similar to such contemporaneous classics as Hek Harvey's *Carroll of Souls* (VS #37), Curtis Harrington's *Night Tide* (VS #28), and Sidney Hayers' *Barn, Witch, Broom* (VS #96), with which it would make an ideal double feature, follows young coed Nan Barlow (American actress Stevenson) as she journeys to the haunted, perpetually fog-enshrouded New England hamlet of Whitewood, the site of a 1692 witch burning. It's immediately apparent to the viewer, if not initially to Nan, that unspeakable evil's afoot in the local hotel fills with mysterious guests gathering for a diabolical purpose. The black-and-white *City* not only brims with atmosphere and suspense but benefits from a top-quality cast, from Stevenson to Lee as Nan's steadily sinister professor and Jessel as a rancorous witch. Extras include separate audio commentary tracks and interview segments with Lee (a perfect raconteur who's immensely entertaining in both capacities) and occasionally drawing and digressive director Murray, along with a bonus interview with Stevenson (who later went on to produce *Slam Like Walter Hill's Southern Comfort*), culled over from VCI's 2001 DVD edition. New additions include a fresh commentary by horror author Bruce G. Halliwell, the complete *American Horror Film's Southern Comfort* and theatrical trailer. In sum, VCI profits not just a terrific terror film in pristine condition but an entire evening of informative fun.

—The Phantom

WARNER ARCHIVE

(521 9919)D 2/16

ARCTIC FLIGHT (1951)B&W 8'5"8"
D: Lew Landau, Wayne Munsie, Lela Albright, Alan Hale, Jr., Carol Thomsen, Tom Rochon, Phil Teaf 78 mins.

Ensemble leading man turned B action star (and real-life flyer) Morris trades in his horse for a puddle jumper plane as Alaskan bush pilot Mike Wren in this surprisingly beguiling, nostalgic Menzies adventure based in (at least partially) on location. Wayne's recent *Sierra Passage* costar and future *Peter Gunn* mentor Albright plays Martha Raymond, an increasingly annoying school teacher who tries our best to transport her to a remote Eskimo village dangerously close to Soviet-controlled Big Diomed territory. While Mike and Martha bicker and spar, another *Sierra Passage* alum, future *Gilligan's Island* subvert Hale, surfaces as John Weatherly, an early, overworked millionaire who convinces Mike to take him on a prolonged bear-hunting trip that may in fact be a cover for a traitorous Communist Menzies agenda. *Arctic Flight* is usually content to let its preboreal dramas simmer while lavishing most of its attention on daily life as it's lived in Mike's Alaskan home base, with much time spent conversing in the local bar, observing native Eskimo dances and rituals, perusing and ducking romantic dalliances (specifically with smitten Eskimo lass and Susan Cabot classie Thomsen), bawling (Morris' double has a prolonged sob-to-with an agro avial pilot portrayed by veteran steamboat Dale Van Sick), and just hanging out. The film seems at no great hurry to cut to the chase, though said chase ultimately concludes on a satisfying ironic note. Withal, *Arctic Flight* may well be the most relaxed Red Scare movie ever to prop up the back end of a '50s double bill.

—The Phantom

LIZZIE (1957)B&W 8'5"8"

D: Hugo Haas, Eleanor Parker, Richard Boone, Joan Blondell, Hugo Haas, Rae Roman, Dorothy Arnold, Johnny Mathis 81 mins

Long relegated to the cinematic margins with a status of film-museum, now cut 1980s B melodramas like *The Other Woman* (1984) and *Hit and Run* (1957)—usually name variations on *A Postman Always Rings Twice* involving a lionel triangle around a blonde lady (Cleo Moore or Beverly Michaels), an opportunistic stud (Lance Fuller, Vince Edwards), and a tragic older man (played by the filmmaker himself)—Czech emigre auteur Haas unexpectedly crossed through to the mainstream with this Multiple Personality Disorder drama adapted from a Shirley (The Hunning of Bill House) Jackson novel. *The Bird's Nest*.

Produced by Kirk Douglas's Bryna Productions and released the same year as Nunsally Johnson's similarly themed, higher-profiled *Jezebel*, Woodward showcases **The Three Faces of Eve** (20th Century Fox), Lizzie features a broken man by actress Parker, late of Otto Preminger's *The Man with the Golden Arm*, as repressed insurance worker Elizabeth, who by night transforms into loud, ugly Ann Lizzie, causing local cops to look for kewpie characters to seduce. At the urging of an enigmatic neighbor (Hans in one of his stunner parts), Elizabeth reluctantly entrusts her case to understanding psychiatrist Boone (in a change of pace role in which he hardly yells at all), who works to bring out his patient's third, real self, the better-adjusted but all-but-buried Beth White. Woodward general for more critical acclaim, even cooping a Best Actress Oscar, Parker is equally terrific, especially during her Lizzie phase, where she shows to her heart's (and lungs') content, slaps up a noose, and sends death threats (!) to her sedate alter ego. Hans ups the exploitation ante with a wacky febrile nightmare sequence and final flashback, while the ever-dependable Blondell neatly seals her scenes as Lizzie's boozey, and vetted aunt. Perhaps the film's biggest surprise, though, considering its only A- pedigree, is an appearance by up-and-coming crooner Johnny Mathis, in his lone feature-film cameo, as an *unkindly* downscale lounge singer. While the MPD movie craze—along with its thematic cousin, the identity-shuffling reconstruction picture (e.g., *The Search for Bridey Murphy*, Roger Corman's surreal knockoff *The Unaddicted*—quickly ran its course, Lizzie survives as both excellent viewing for Hans buffs and a sturdy psychological thriller in its own right.

—The Phantom

THE WOMAN IN WHITE (1948)B&W

8'5"8"

D: Peter Godfrey, Alexis Smith, Eleanor Parker, Sydney Greenstreet, Glynis O'Connell, Agnes Moorehead, John Abbott, John Farrow, Carl Boss 109 mins (Warner Archive) 3/16

For surprise entertainment, you can't do better than this amazingly modern, highly gripping suspense based on the 1889 novel by Dickens' contemporary and friend, the now nearly forgotten Wilkie Collins, acclaimed inventor of the detective novel. Arlen Walter Hawthright (a not terribly charismatic Young) arrives at the Farrow estate to begin employment as Farrow hires Lizzie's painting teacher but not before encountering a bewitching young woman crashed in while wandering, terrified, in the woods, claiming to have escaped from an asylum. Crossing the threshold, he's nearly talked to death by Laura's companion and cousin, the very practical Marion (Smith). Things pick up considerably after this needlessly chatty opening, especially



once Hawthright meets the various eccentric members of the household marvelously naming, quipsters might Uncle Frederick (Abbott) locked in a high-out-loud, subdued gay S&M complaint game with hapless servant Louis (Bosch), resident parasite Count Focco (Greenstreet), mean to all except his monkey, nothing, put-upon Chairman Focco (Moonhead), who harbors a family secret, and, shortly, Lizzie's nefarious, gold-digging sister and Farrow's last living co-companion, Sir Percival (Glynis). What the chatter swirl tantalizing clues about both the reality and identity of the Woman in White, Ann Cathetic. The puzzling lessons proceed and there's a ton-up as to whether Marion or Laura is falling in love with Walter, but Greenstreet seals the show, dictating a series of interrelated crimes to gain control of the Farrow wealth, perusing Calabrese opens. In the style of *My Name Is Julia Ross* and *Dead of Winter*, Laura is to be wed, controlled, imprisoned and abducted Greenstreet is mesmerizing. Hushhush in his modern, mocking *swagfrod*, whether fondling jewels or burning sex with Marion. The plot revolves around these better or worse bargains and, because *idiotism* is precluded, out, you're kept guessing about the end game. This being Victorian England, it gives nothing away to use *idiotism* and the possibility of a lost hair figure in the story. A veritable Parker (Lizzie, *The Man with the Golden Arm*) turns in solid parts as both Laura and Ann.

—Nancy Naglin

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ABOUT NANCY NAGLIN:

Author, film critic and freelance writer Nancy Naglin has been the Art-House columnist for *The Phantom of the Movies' VideoScope* since 1993. Her work has appeared in numerous publications, including *The New York Daily News*, *New York Magazine*, *The Village Voice* and *Crawdaddy*.

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MR. UBIQUITY: A TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM SCHALLERT By Don Vaughan

In 1994, I spent three and a half hours on the phone interviewing William Schallert about his film and television career. I needed that much time because Schallert's resume truly was astounding: more than 680 television appearances, scores of film roles, and numerous theatrical productions. There was a lot to talk about.

Indeed, few actors have appeared in more episodic television than William Schallert. He is perhaps best known as Martin Lane, Patsy Duke's father on *The Patsy Duke Show*, the taciturn Mr. Pennington on *The Many Lives of Dobie Gillis*, and *The Admiral on Get Smart*, but Schallert's television credits extend far beyond those memorable roles. Tackles remember him as Nels Bane in *The Trouble with Tribbles*. Western fans remember him from stints on *The Adventures of Jim Bowie*, *Maverick*, *Gunslinger*, *Wanted: Dead or Alive* and many other others. And comedy buffs recall with fondness his work on *Leave It to Beaver*, *The Donna Reed Show*, *Father Knows Best* and *The Red Skelton Hour*, among many other popular shows.

Schallert made an equally notable mark on the silver screen, beginning with an uncredited role in the 1947 drama *The Foxes of Harrow*. He appeared in war movies, westerns, melodramas and comedies, but it's his many serious fiction credits that Monster Kids know and love. *Mighty Joe Young*, *The Man from Planet X*, *Captive Women*, *Thrall*, *Gog*, *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, *The Monolith Monsters*, *Colossus: The Forbin Project*, *Twilight Zone: The Movie*, *Gremlins*, *Innerspace*, *Martian*...

While these movies are loved by genre fans, for Schallert many were quick, blink-and-you'll-miss-them acting gigs that he filled in a day and quickly forgot. Some, however, remained memorable. Of *Colossus: The Forbin Project*, in which he played the lead of the CIA, Schallert proudly noted, "I'm the only person I know who was accompanied by an H-bomb!" And he recalled with fondness his relatively minor role as the poetic Union soldier in John Huston's understated *The Red Badge of Courage*. "I've always been very proud of that film," he told me. "It's somewhat of a classic."

Schallert portrayed early in his career that he would never be a leading man, so he set out to be the best character actor that he could. Every casting director seemed to see him differently, he found, and that allowed him to play a wildly eclectic array of characters over the course of his five-decade film and television career. Though not particularly well-known by name, his face and voice were

universally recognized, and for years he made a good living doing voice-over work on commercials. Remember those ubiquitous Pop-Tarts commercials in the 1970s featuring Milton the Toaster? Yeah, that was William Schallert.

The sheer number of Schallert's acting credits is truly staggering, so it's interesting to note that his career almost ended before it started. Like so many struggling actors, Schallert held a number of odd jobs to make ends meet, including selling water softeners door to door (he quit when his demonstration kit was stolen from his car), and after a while began to doubt that he would be able to make a living as an actor. In fact, Schallert's fear of failure was so great that he started seeing a therapist, who eventually told him, "If you're talented, you'll work." Schallert took those words to heart and gradually established a career that would make any actor proud. According to the IMDb, Schallert's last acting gig was an uncredited bit part on *Two Broke Girls* in 2014, when he was 91.

William Schallert passed away on May 11 at age 93. Newspaper obituaries noted his best-known roles on *The Patsy Duke Show*, *The Many Lives of Dobie Gillis* and *Star Trek*, but some came close to capturing the true scope of his career. "There are a great many talented character actors in Hollywood, but there will only be one William Schallert. And he will be missed."

WILLIAM SCHALLERT FUN FACTS

✧ In the early '60s Schallert starred in the pilot of a television series called *Philbert* that would have combined animation with live action. But when ABC realized how much the series would cost, it killed the show and went with *Pm Dickens—He's Fenster instead*.

✧ In the 1950s Schallert was nearly blackballed from Hollywood for perceived Communist sympathies as a result of some persons he signed in support of colleagues who had been blacklisted. Thankfully, things cooled off before it adversely affected his career.

✧ Schallert was president of the Screen Actors Guild from 1979 to 1983.

✧ Schallert worked side by side with Clark Gable in the 1957 drama *Band of Angels* but was too overzealous to introduce himself, and Gable, for reasons unknown, refused to give Schallert the time of day. "In effect, Gable and I worked together," Schallert recalled, "but I never met him!"

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End Credits Contributing Writers

- ✧ David Annandale's latest novel is *The Unhatched*, and can be found at www.blacklibrary.com.
- ✧ Don Cerny plans to vacation in his back yard TARDIS.
- ✧ The dynamic dad-daughter duo of Terry & Tiffany Duffee operate the award-winning internet radio station *Cult Radio A-Go-Go!*
- ✧ Ronald Charles Epstein's book reviews are quoted on Amazon.ca.
- ✧ Tim Ferrante gave dice advice and was used for covercharging.
- ✧ Rob Frenne was last seen at The Comic Drive-In.
- ✧ Charlie Hill is a Southern-based writer specializing in movie and music journalism.
- ✧ Mandy Howard is an entertainment journalist based in North Carolina.
- ✧ Joe Kane would give a shout-out to the hermit community, but they never return his calls.
- ✧ David J. Moore is the author of *The Good, the Tough & the Deadly: Action Movies & Stars 1960s-Present* (Scribner Publishing).
- ✧ Scope out Nancy Nagler's e-books at california.com and the Amazon Kindle Store.
- ✧ Follow film critic David-Eljiah Naiman on Facebook and Twitter. @DavidEljiahN
- ✧ You can follow Joseph Perry at monstercriticshocktroop.blogspot.com or on Twitter. @JosephPerryJWP
- ✧ Debbie Reelton's directorial debut, *Model Hunger*, hits the DVD runway via Wild Eye. Release on July.
- ✧ John Seal hopes to avoid comic-related fragments this summer.
- ✧ Don Vaughan is the author of *Red Tails: The Beverly Washburn Story* (DustMoose Media).
- ✧ Scott Voisin's sci-fi Character Wings 2 is now available from BearMoose Media.

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PHANTOM FLASHES!

ACTION UPDATE: In the action arena, La-crosse leads the way with a busy lineup headed by Alex and Jonathan Brewer's highly anticipated latest caper *The Trust*, starring Nicolas Cage, Elijah Wood, Sky Ferreira, and Jerry Lewis as Nick's aged dad Lakewood due from the same label are the partial found-footage mystery *The Lovings* (Tapes, B&W; Wilts and Mark Ford. Co-starring in *Previous Crises*, and Tim Relfs in a stranded DEA agent in *600 Miles*). Also where, *Oscilloscope* enters the redefined South American jungle-as colonial adventure *Embrace the Serpent*, Margolin debuts Domingue Parodi in *Gridlocked*, *Well Go USA* unleashes Tony Jaa in the fast and furious sequel *Kill Zone 2*, Gerald Butler, Aaron Eckhart, Morgan Freeman, Angela Bassett and Robin Wright remade in *London Has Fallen*, via Universal Studios, which also releases the video game-style killfest *Hardcore Henry*, headlining Shurlo (Chapple) Copley.

KILLER THRILLERS: Judd Hirsch plays a psychiatrist with a secret in the psychological thriller *Altered Minds* (E One Entertainment), while Helen Mirren heads a topflight ensemble cast that includes the late Alan Rickman, Aaron Paul, Barkhad (Captain Phillips) Aida and Jane Ginn in the ultra-suspenseful, morally damning drone attack and killer *Eye in the Sky* (Universal Studios), and Patrick Stewart portrays a menacing skinned homicide who targets a rock band in the well-earned *Green Room* (Lionsgate), costarring Anton Yelchin and Imogen Poots. Also in the mix are a brace of black comedy thriller combos—Nicholas Hoult and Rosamund Pike in the *American Psycho*-like *Kill Your Friends* (Well Go USA) and Mays (Ediscovery) Rudolph, Kristen Wigg and Will Ferrell in *The Spoils Before Dying* (Anchor Bay Entertainment)—along with the paternal rescue thriller *Term Life* (Universal Studios), featuring Vance Vaughn, Heather Steinfeld and Bill Paxton.

HORROR HORIZON: Paramount Home Entertainment launches the 13 Abrams-produced horror for 10 *Cloverfield Lane*, directed by Dan Trachtenberg and toppling John Goodman and Mary Elizabeth Winstead, while Jason Blum takes the lead in *The Abandoned* (Cineplex), Shant' Packey stars the Halloween-set horror *The Pun-house Massacre* (Shout! Factory), and Ed Parris originates *The Girl in the Photographs* (Akshay). On the sci-fi front, filmmaker Jeff (Take Shelter) Nichols delivers the eerie *Midnight Special* (Warner Home Entertainment), starring Nichols' regular Michael Shannon, while Magnolia Home Entertainment releases the disaster film *The Wave* 15.

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